Fvcina di Marte
24

Michał Norbert Faszcza

Hans Delbrück

and the Birth of Modern Military History: Creation – Concepts – Reception

Società Italiana
di Storia Militare
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FVCINA DI MARTE

COLLANA DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

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L'expérience historique a favorisé la prise de conscience théorique. La raison, effectivement, ne s'exerce pas dans le vide, elle travaille toujours sur une matière, mais Clausewitz distingue, sans les opposer, la conceptualisation et le raisonnement d'une part, l'observation historique de l'autre.

R. Aron, *Penser la guerre*, 1976, I, p. 456

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Michał Norbert Faszcza

Hans Delbrück

and

the Birth of Modern Military History: Creation – Concepts – Reception

To my wife Kasia
— the true Merida the Brave

Prize for the best monograph of 2024
by the Polish Society for Ancient Studies.

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Preface

Writing about military history is not easy because armed conflicts are closely associated with immense destruction and suffering. In such situations, every historian has a responsibility to avoid trivialization, which often stems from unfulfilled dreams of a military career in one's youth. At this point, engaging with the achievements of classics, who confronted the often dramatic consequences of war, becomes particularly significant. Despite facing many terrifying events, they often maintained their deep faith in humanism and the civilizing role of scholarship.

Reflection on historiography, and sometimes on history itself, should be an essential element of a scholar's reality. Unfortunately, some consider it the domain of authors who "do not want or are unable to spend time on tedious archival searches." This sense of superiority can result in a surprising lack of methodological awareness, leading not only to a poor understanding of the changes taking place in Western historiography but also to unfair opinions about the pioneers of individual specialties.

The work of Hans Delbrück has accompanied me for nearly fifteen years in my historical studies. Inspired by the heated discussions among young classicists regarding the research perspectives offered by the work of John Keegan and other representatives of the "new military history," I started paying closer attention to the classics of historiography from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My appreciation for their contributions to the development of academic military history grew as I discovered more deserving individuals and recognized the sense of responsibility that characterized many of them. Their attitude differs greatly from the common perception of military affairs researchers as either proponents of militarism or naïve admirers of "military virtues."

The first and most relevant proponent of a different attitude was Delbrück. My decision to write a book dedicated to the historiographical concepts he pro-

moted was not only a way to repay an intellectual debt but also an expression of concern for the future of military history. For the field to survive in a rapidly changing reality, it must definitively reject the "general staff perspective" and fully implement the academic research model. Otherwise, the process of pushing military history out of academia will continue, threatening a return to the state before 1881 and its negative consequences for research quality.

*

Even if a book has a specific historian's name on the cover, his/her vision of history is always the result of readings and interactions with other scholars. Throughout the publication process, I received valuable advice and feedback from many people, whom I would like to express my gratitude here.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Adam Ziółkowski (University of Warsaw) for teaching me the invaluable lesson that military history is an integral part of universal history and that grasping military issues requires an understanding of culture and social relations. Professor Agata A. Kluczek (University of Silesia in Katowice) has tolerated my unconventional ideas with patience and understanding.

In recent years, I have had the pleasure of engaging in many conversations and participating in various initiatives, which deepened my appreciation of military history. I would like to express my gratitude to the following individuals for their kind encouragement, helpful suggestions, and careful reading of specific sections of my book: Professors Konrad Bobiatyński (University of Warsaw), Mirosław Nagielski (University of Warsaw), Dariusz Nawrot (University of Silesia in Katowice), Andrzej Niewiński (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), Łukasz Różycki (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), and Doctor Dawid Madziar (University of Silesia in Katowice). I hope delving into the book brings them even a little bit of the pleasure I experienced during the creative process.

Words of gratitude are also due to the reviewers of the Polish edition of my book: Professors Piotr Mikietyński (Jagiellonian University in Krakow) and Grzegorz Podruczny (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). Their comments helped me to introduce some corrections to my narration.

It is a true honor for me to have the opportunity to publish a book about Delbrück in Italy. A reminder of this outstanding scholar in Piero Pieri's homeland was made possible thanks to the kind support of Professor Virgilio Ilari (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan) and the Italian Society of Military History (Società Italiana di Storia Militare). I am incredibly grateful to them.

From the beginning of my academic journey, I was accompanied by my father, Doctor Dariusz Faszcza (Aleksander Gieysztor Academy in Pułtusk). His understanding of military matters is matched only by his sensitivity to the complexity of human fates. Without our hours of conversation and mutual inspiration, my monograph likely would never have been written.

Research visits to Rome (2021; University of Rome "La Sapienza," French School in Rome, American Academy in Rome), Berlin (2023; Humboldt University, Free University), and Greifswald (2023; University of Greifswald) were extremely helpful for working on the book. The Lanckoroński Foundation scholarship made my stay in Rome possible, and the Institute of History at the University of Silesia in Katowice funded the research conducted in Germany.

The author would also like to thank the following institutions for making their collections available: the University of Warsaw Library, the Central Military Library in Warsaw, the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, and the Polish Institute of International Affairs. Special thanks go to the Interlibrary Loan Department staff at the Scientific Information Center and Academic Library (CINiBA) of the University of Silesia in Katowice for their help in acquiring difficult-to-find items.

Last but not least, as every historian knows, proper working conditions are essential for successfully completing academic projects. Thanks to my beloved wife Kasia's understanding and support, I was able to write this book in a truly comfortable environment..

*

The first edition of my book titled *Hans Delbrück i narodziny nowoczesnej historii wojskowości. Twórczość – koncepcje – recepcja* was published in Poland in 2024 by the University of Silesia Press (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego).

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Introduction

The classics of historiography are quickly being forgotten. The constant pursuit of novelty, often enforced by institutions, occurs at the expense of understanding the roots of one's field of study. Prominent scholars' names are sometimes spoken of with thinly veiled condescension, as if the value of their publications is determined solely by the passage of time. Younger generations of researchers often fail to recognize that they stand on the shoulders of outstanding predecessors, whose work enables them to ask new questions and make further discoveries. It is worth pausing to look back and reflect on one's research identity. Historians at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries already addressed various issues, and the proud belief in the novelty of current trends often stems from ignorance of classic achievements.[1]

Hans Delbrück (1848–1929) was one of the great classic scholars. Even in his lifetime, he evoked strong emotions among the German intellectual elite and sparked constructive debates. He achieved a feat inaccessible to most: he founded a new historical specialty, military history, which is still taught at universities today. During his time, military history was the exclusive domain of the military historical service, which used it for training, education, and inspiration for developing current strategic or tactical solutions. Delbrück believed that the military sphere of human existence was equivalent to others and opposed its exclusion from academic research. In order to establish a new field of study, he had to battle the reluctance of the academic community and professional officers to innovate. Ultimately, however, he succeeded, as evidenced by the hundreds, if not thousands, of annual publications on military history.

1 Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion. Hans Delbrück und der Krieg in der Geschichte,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, pp. IX–X.

Therefore, it is particularly important to remember Delbrück's work today. The phenomenon of a return to the "general staff perspective," which he fought against, is advancing. At the same time, doubts about the justification for teaching military history in universities are growing. This problem is not new. However, refuting the unsubstantiated accusations of self-proclaimed reformers is difficult and requires examining the specialty's origins, reevaluating its development, and questioning the validity of returning to a model based on the dominance of military institutions. Despite the passage of years, Delbrück's work remains remarkably relevant and inspiring for researchers who view military history as part of universal history.

My study focuses on Delbrück's historical achievements. It primarily covers his publishing activity, historiographical concepts, and how his legacy was received. Rather than providing a traditional biography, a significant portion of the text analyzes Delbrück's influence on later publications about military history. Naturally, writing about any scholar, especially one of Delbrück's stature, requires a biographical introduction. However, my main intention is to showcase the sources, essence, and vitality of Delbrück's ideas. Thus, "*The Birth of Modern Military History*" became part of the title, as Delbrück's influence on the present day is evident through his often unconscious achievements. The book also reflects on the evolution of Polish military history, in which Delbrück's absence is notable. I found the causes and consequences of his absence to be an interesting research topic, providing insight into the current state of Polish military historiography—not well known in Western countries.

In an era dominated by Anglo-American historiography, it is particularly important to remember figures like Delbrück. First, it restores the proper place of German historiography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This period was a time when German historiography led in Europe and, consequently, the world. Second, it enables us to grasp the essence of military history, which is often reduced to shallow descriptions of wars, organizations, or weaponry, lacking deeper reflection. Third, it makes us aware of the costs of scientific breakthroughs, the effects of which may only become fully apparent toward the end of a scholar's life or after his/her death, with no guarantee of widespread recognition. Awareness of the difficulties in quickly disseminating vital discoveries should not discourage researchers following a similar path. Even though

Delbrück is lesser known than many of his imitators, no one can take away his honorable title as the "father of military history."

The Berlin professor periodically sparked lively interest, usually in areas outside his academic work, such as his political involvement and his influence on the German strategy debate leading up to World War I (1914–1918). Since these aspects were linked to his historical writing to a certain extent, I incorporated them into my narrative. Furthermore, publications on non-academic topics offer valuable biographical details, providing a comprehensive portrayal of Delbrück.

The most exhaustive studies focus on Delbrück's political activities. It encompasses his parliamentary career and his journalistic writings, as well as his informal contacts with leading politicians of the German Empire. The period from 1883 to 1918 is primarily covered in the monographs by Annelise Thimme[2] and Jerzy Krasuski,[3] the years 1914–1918 are addressed in the works by Klaus Schwabe,[4] and the years 1918–1929 are covered in the publications by Christian Lüdtke.[5] A special place in their works is given to Delbrück's attitude toward extreme political movements and how successive German governments treated national minorities. *Preußischen Jahrbücher*, which he edited from 1883 to 1919, remains an indispensable source for understanding his political views. Recently, the journalistic aspect of Delbrück's work received a separate mono-

2 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker der Wilhelminischen Epoche*, Droste, Düsseldorf 1955. See also Ead., «Delbrück, Hans,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 3, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1957, pp. 577–578.

3 Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu niemieckiego w dobie wilhelmińskiej. Poglądy polityczne Hansa Delbrücka*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 1961. See also Id., *Z dziejów niemieckiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX wieku. Eseje filozoficzno-historyczne*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 1965.

4 Klaus Schwabe, «Ursprung und Verbreitung des alldeutschen Annexionismus in der deutschen Professorenschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg,» *Vierteljahrshefte* für Zeitgeschichte, 14, 2, 1966, pp. 105–138; Id., *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Musterschmidt, Göttingen 1969.

5 Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar. Für eine konservative Republik – gegen Kriegsschuldlüge und Dolchstoßlegende*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2018; Id., «Hans Delbrück als „Kassandra". Die Feier seines 70. Geburtstages am 11. November 1918 als Brennpunkt der liberalen Sinnsuche im deutschen Zusammenbruch,» in Sebastian Elsbach, Marcel Böhles, Andreas Braune (ed.), *Demokratische Persönlichkeiten in der Weimarer Republik*, Steiner, Stuttgart 2020, pp. 315–325.

graph by Jonas Klein.[6]

The second most well-known thematic area is the "strategy dispute" (*Strategiestreit*), which Delbrück engaged in from 1878 to 1920 with representatives of the German military historical service and their academic supporters. The dispute centered on assigning one of two types of strategies to renowned European commanders: the "strategy of annihilation" (*Niederwerfungsstrategie*) and the "strategy of attrition" (*Ermattungsstrategie*). The most important publications on the "strategy dispute" were written by Arden Bucholz[7] and Lieutenant Colonel Sven Lange.[8] A substantial addition is a book by Lieutenant Colonel Martin Raschke,[9] which highlights the research and publishing achievements of officers of the Great General Staff (Großer Generalstab) from 1890 to 1914 and even earlier, back to 1871.

Bucholz, Lange, and Raschke primarily focus on the impact of the "strategy debate" on the German strategic planning.[10] Another important aspect that they overlook is the debate's impact on the establishment of academic military history. The outcome of the conflict determined if university researchers would be considered competent enough to address military issues or remain on the margins. This question distinguishes the course of the "strategy debate" presented in my book from previous approaches, which have given greater prominence to purely historiographical issues.

Thimme and Buchholz collaborated with Lene (Helene) Hobe, one of Delbrück's daughters, on their work.[11] Their contact with a Delbrück family mem-

6 Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«. Hans Delbrück und die »Preußischen Jahrbücher« (1883–1919), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2023.

7 Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City 1985.

8 Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹. Kriegführung und Kriegsgeschichte in der Kontroverse 1879–1914*, Rombach, Freiburg im Breisgau 1995.

9 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab. Die friderizianischen Kriege in der amtlichen deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1890–1914*, Rombach, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993.

10 This way of perceiving the "strategy dispute" was largely shaped by: Otto Haintz, «Einleitung,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., De Gruyter, Berlin 1962, pp. III–XXI.

11 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 5–6; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. IX; Id., «Preface,» in Id. (ed. & transl.), *Del-*

ber allowed them to access family materials, which significantly enriched the biographical information they contained.

In-depth, fundamental research on the academic work and historiographical views of the "father of military history" is still lacking. This lack of reflection is partly due to the breadth of Delbrück's work and his involvement in public affairs. Consequently, his academic activities are not prominently featured in the memoirs left by his colleagues and students,[12] leaving a surprisingly large number of possibilities for researchers.

The characterization of Delbrück, prepared by Gordon A. Craig,[13] Karl

brück's Modern Military History, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, p. XIII.

12 Martin Hobohm, *Hans Delbrück der Siebzigjährige*, Engelmann, Berlin 1918; Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 7–34; Wilhelm Groener, «Delbrück und die Kriegswissenschaften,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 35–40; Ernst Buchfinck, «Delbrücks Lehre, das Heer und der Weltkrieg,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 41–49; Max Montgelas, «Was ich von Delbrück gelernt habe,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 50–55; Paul Rohrbach, «Delbrück als Prophet,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 56–62; Paul Rühlmann, «Delbrücks „Mittwochabend",» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 75–81; Bruno Baier, Emil Daniels, Eugen Schiffer, «Drei Reden. Zum Gedächtnis an Hans Delbrück gehalten in der außerordentlichen Sitzung der Mittwochsgesellschaft,» *PJ*, 218, 1929, pp. 290–303; Friedrich Meinecke, «Vermichtes [Hans Delbrück],» *HZ*, 140, 3, 1929, pp. 702–704; Arthur Rosenberg, «Hans Delbrück. Der Kritiker der Kriegsgeschichte,» *Die Gesellschaft*, 6, 2, 1929, pp. 245–252; Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück als Historiker und Politiker,» *Die Sammlung*, 4, 1949, pp. 134–144; Axel von Harnack, «Hans Delbrück als Historiker und Politiker,» *Neue Rundschau*, 63, 1952, pp. 408–426.

13 Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, pp. 326–353.

Christ,[14] and Ulrich Raulff,[15] comes to the fore. Each author emphasizes a different aspect of Delbrück's historical writing. Craig viewed him as a man who combined the academic method of philological research with the rationality derived from practical experience, which helped Delbrück to create his own principles of source analysis. Christ focused on Delbrück's significant contributions to ancient studies, which required challenging the widely held belief in the absolute credibility of ancient historians. Raulff, on the other hand, saw the "father of military history" as a visionary who achieved goals deemed unattainable by others. All of the authors devoted considerable attention to Delbrück's historiographical concepts, primarily utilizing his major works. While acknowledging the influence of these works, focusing on lesser-known publications is also worthwhile. They often contain programmatic content absent from more extensive publications, allowing for a greater understanding of the evolution of Delbrück's historiographical views than has been possible until now.

Although they are usually more general[16] and aim to introduce readers to selected elements of his work,[17] other texts dedicated to Delbrück contain valuable

14 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1972, pp. 159–200; Id., «Einleitung zum Nachdruck der dritten Auflage von 1964,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, pp. 693–708.

15 Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion,» *cit*.

16 Above all: Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück (1848–1929),» in Bernadotte E. Schmitt (ed.), *Some Historians of Modern Europe: Essays in Historiography*, Kennikat Press, Chicago 1942, pp. 100–129; Andreas Hillgruber, «Hans Delbrück,» in Hans-Ulrich Wehler (ed.), *Deutsche Historiker*, 4, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1972, pp. 40–52; Arden Bucholz, «Introduction: Delbrück's Life and Work,» in Id. (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, pp. 1–40; Wilhelm Deist, «Hans Delbrück. Militärhistoriker und Publizist,» *MZ*, 57, 1998, pp. 371–383; Sven Lange, «Hans Delbrück: Der Kritiker der Kriegsgeschichte,» in Hans Ehlert (ed.), *Deutsche Militärhistoriker von Hans Delbrück bis Andreas Hillgruber*, Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt, Potsdam 2010, pp. 9–20.

17 E.g., Peter Paret, «Hans Delbrück on Military Critics and Military Historians,» *MA*, 30, 3, 1966, pp. 148–152; Arden Bucholz, «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *The Historian*, 55, 3, 1993, pp. 517–526; Bernard S. Bachrach, «Early Medieval Military Demography: Some Observations on the Methods of Hans Delbrück,» in Donald Kagay, L. J. Andrew Villalon (ed.), *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge 1999, pp. 3–20; Stephen Morillo, «Contrary Winds: Theories of History and the Limits of *Sachkritik*,» in Gregory I. Halfond (ed.), *The Medieval*

insights as well. References to Delbrück also appear in numerous papers not directly dedicated to him, which present arguments aligning with his interpretations. However, no partial study can replace a comprehensive analysis of his historical legacy because it does not reveal Delbrück's influence on subsequent generations.

Delbrück's influence on military historiography must be reconstructed through a thorough reading of works crucial to its evolution. Despite his monograph focusing on antiquity, Luigi Loreto provides significant assistance.[18] Ignoring the reception of Delbrück's work means missing the vitality of his concepts. In my opinion, it is just as important to understand how Delbrück's ideas were received as it is to understand their origin and spread.

While writing my book, I quickly realized that Delbrück himself was the best source of information about him. The abundance of autobiographical elements in his works is exceptional and demonstrates his profound reflection on the circumstances influencing his historical endeavors.[19] His letters to his mother during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), in turn, are invaluable for understanding how Delbrück abandoned his romantic notions about military service and combat participation.[20]

The impressions and memories of people from the Berlin professor's circle are an important addition to, and sometimes verification of, the information he provided. They offer valuable insights into the creative process of the "father of military history," his character, and his relationships with groups both inside and outside of universities.

Additionally, I used historiographical publications written in the primary congress languages (English, French, German, and Italian) and supplemented them with texts in Polish, as well as Spanish and Portuguese. I paid particu-

Way of War: Studies in Medieval Military History in Honor of Bernard S. Bachrach, Taylor & Francis, Burlington 2015, pp. 205–220.

18 Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare del mondo antico. Prospettive retrospettive*, Jovene, Napoli 2006.

19 Delbrück's work includes two strictly autobiographical papers: Hans Delbrück, «Danksagung,» *PJ*, 174, 1918, pp. 442–445; Id., «Persönliche Erinnerungen an Kaiser Friedrich und sein Haus,» *PJ*, 62, 1888, pp. 97–116.

20 Id., «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» in Arden Bucholz (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, pp. 43–49.

lar attention to the development of German historical discourse at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including polemical works contesting Delbrück's findings. My intention was to present his writings in the context of his time, without projecting contemporary ideas—and often prejudices—onto them. In my view, it is unacceptable to hold history hostage to current needs and form opinions without first understanding the specifics of a given era, as this inevitably contributes to historiographical distortions.

The structure of the book stems from the presented assumptions. It consists of an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography including the works cited in the footnotes, and indexes.

Chapter 1 introduces Delbrück's life and academic achievements. For greater clarity, the chapter is divided into five subchapters covering different periods of his life. Such a division most clearly illustrates the successive stages of the Berlin professor's academic career, which are closely linked to his publications.

Chapter 2 discusses Delbrück's historiographical views in relation to dominant trends in Germany at the time. Chapter 3 attempts to establish intellectual connections between the "father of military history" and General Carl von Clausewitz.

Chapter 4 discusses the origins, progression, and consequences of the "strategy dispute" led by Delbrück, primarily with officers of the military historical service. This topic is presented in a separate chapter due to its importance in the development of academic military history.

The next three chapters discuss Delbrück's influence on military historiography and his role in developing the "new military history." The focus is on the period after World War II (1939–1945), when military history began appearing in universities around the world. Considering the scope of the publication, I examined four cultural circles: Anglo-American, French, German, and Italian. The final chapter, in contrast, is devoted entirely to presenting the effects of Delbrück's influence on Polish military studies.

Delbrück's comments on current wars, especially World War I, were outside my area of interest. Although they are valuable sources of knowledge for historians today, they do not fall within the field of historiography.

Finally, I would like to share Delbrück's ironic observation that the quality

of a tree is not determined by how many rings it has.[21] Even if history is a cumulative field of study, an increase in data alone does not indicate the quality of the conclusions drawn. Achieving the right results requires a depth of perspective allowing one to assess someone's work while considering the underlying research assumptions. It is crucial to keep this in mind when engaging with the works of historiographical classics because some of their interpretations have become outdated, not because their understanding of how research should be conducted has failed the test of time. Some classics have simply been forgotten because of our focus on novelty.

21 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. XLIII.

Chapter 1

Life and work

1.1 Youth and student years (1848–1873)[1]

Hans Gottlieb Leopold Delbrück was born on November 11, 1848, in Bergen, Rügen, which was then part of the Kingdom of Prussia. He was the eldest child of Berthold Delbrück (1817–1868) and Laura Delbrück (née von Henning; 1826–1911). While his father worked as a judge in the Bergen district court beginning in 1845, his mother was responsible for running a social salon, managing the household, and raising the children, according to the norms of the era. Hans' younger siblings were born soon after: Max (1850–1919), Emilie (1854–1904), and Ernst (1858–1933).

The Delbrück family of Lower Saxony was well-established in Prussian po-

1 The most important publications on Delbrück's early life remain: Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City 1985, pp. 19–24 (with an error in the form of a one-year date shift); Id., «Introduction: Delbrück's Life and Work,» in Id. (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, pp. 1–6 (with partial correction of the previously provided dates)—in particular due to the use of private documents and family stories. This subsection is primarily based on the information found in the cited works. Important details were also added by: Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück (1848–1929),» in Bernadotte E. Schmitt (ed.), *Some Historians of Modern Europe: Essays in Historiography*, Kennikat Press, Chicago 1942, pp. 101–102; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu niemieckiego w dobie wilhelmińskiej. Poglądy polityczne Hansa Delbrücka*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 1961, pp. 51–54; Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1972, pp. 159–161; Sven Lange, «Hans Delbrück: Der Kritiker der Kriegsgeschichte,» in Hans Ehlert (ed.), *Deutsche Militärhistoriker von Hans Delbrück bis Andreas Hillgruber*, Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt, Potsdam 2010, pp. 10–11; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik. Hans Delbrück – Ausgewählte Korrespondenz (1868–1929),» *Jahresbericht 2018 von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 2019, pp. 38–39; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«. Hans Delbrück und die »Preußischen Jahrbücher« (1883–1919), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2023, pp. 31–34.

litical and cultural life. Hans' great-uncle, Friedrich (1768–1830), was a theologian and tutor to future rulers, including Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795–1861) and Wilhelm I (1797–1888).[2] Hans' grandfather, Gottlieb (1777–1842), from whom Hans got his middle name, graduated from law school. Among his many roles, Gottlieb was the curator of the United Friedrich University (Vereinigte Friedrichs-Universität) of Halle-Wittenberg.[3] Berthold followed in his father's footsteps, also becoming a lawyer.[4] Due to a family conflict arising from political differences, he left Halle and moved to Bergen.

A declared democrat, Berthold supported the changes taking place during the "Spring of Nations" (1848) and, in later years, was highly critical of the policies pursued by Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898).[5] According to family lore, there is an unverifiable anecdote about Hans and Max learning to use firearms: they used a bust of the "Iron Chancellor" as a target.[6] Hans retained his aversion to Bismarck for the rest of his life, although his uncle Rudolph von Delbrück (1817–1903; ennobled in 1896) was referred to as Bismarck's right-hand man. He served as president of the Chancellery of the North German Confederation from 1867 to 1871 and of the Reich Chancellery from 1871 to 1878.[7]

Hans was not interested in Berthold's profession. He found comparative studies of the evolution of customs and tax law tedious and unappealing. Instead, he

2 Johann Friedrich Gottlieb Delbrück, https://mbl.ub.ovgu.de/Biografien/1100.htm [26.07.2023].

3 Gottlieb Delbrück, https://mbl.ub.ovgu.de/Biografien/1461.htm [26.07.2023].

4 The information about Berthold Delbrück's professional career and achievements, which is provided later in this subsection, is based on the findings of: Ferdinand Frensdorff, «Delbrück, Berthold,» in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 5, Duncker und Humblot, Leipzig 1877, pp. 35–36; Gert Liebling, *Auch ich war ein Rüganer. Bekanntes und Unbekanntes aus dem Leben auf Rügen geborener Persönlichkeiten des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wissenschaftsverlag, Putbus 2010, pp. 99–104.

5 The attitude toward the events of 1848 also constituted a significant dividing line within the German academic community, stirring emotions even decades later: Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Musterschmidt, Göttingen 1969, pp. 10–12.

6 Arden Bucholz, «Introduction,» *cit*., p. 2.

7 Rudolph published memoirs covering the years 1817–1867, tactfully avoiding topics related to his holding the most important positions: Rudolph von Delbrück, *Lebenserinnerungen 1817–1867*, 1–2, Duncker und Humblot, Leipzig 1905. Neither Hans, nor his father was mentioned in them even once.

developed closer relationships with his mother and her family. His grandfather, Leopold von Henning (1791–1866), taught philosophy at the Friedrich Wilhelm University (Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität) in Berlin, becoming a professor in 1835. He specialized in the thought of Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), whom he knew personally and assisted for a time.[8] Passionate primarily about music and singing, Laura inherited her father's broad intellectual and cultural horizons, which she successfully instilled in Hans.[9] His interest in Hegelianism, which he developed in his family home, resurfaced several times in his future academic career.

In 1858, Berthold was diagnosed with advanced tuberculosis. The following year, he was promoted to appellate court counselor in Greifswald, where he moved with his family. His professional career did not last long. From 1860 onward, he mostly stayed home as he battled lung disease and the resulting "melancholy" (probably depression).

In 1867, Hans graduated from the Friedrich Ludwig Jahn Gymnasium (Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn-Gymnasium) in Greifswald, obtaining his Abitur. An intriguing annotation on his diploma by his history teacher sheds light on a specific trait of the future military historian's personality. The teacher wrote that Hans would have a chance at success in life if he learned to control his tongue.[10]

After graduating from high school, Hans began studying history at the Ruprecht Karl University (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität) in Heidelberg, although he had briefly considered studying mathematics. He approached historical material analytically, in a manner closely related to the principles of scientific proof based on logic, demonstrating his aptitude for scholarship.[11]

The patriotic sentiments aroused by Prussia's victory over Austria in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 caused Hans to interrupt his studies after the first semester. Following Prussia's great military success, there was a widespread be-

8 Hans-Martin Sass, «Henning, Leopold von,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 8, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1969, pp. 546–547

9 Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück als Historiker und Politiker,» *Die Sammlung*, 4, 1949, p. 134; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 21; Id., «Introduction,» *cit*., pp. 1–2.

10 Martin Hobohm, *Hans Delbrück der Siebzigjährige*, Engelmann, Berlin 1918, p. 16.

11 Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes 1862–1901*, Koehler & Amelang, Leipzig 1941, p. 184.

lief that a new war with France could break out at any moment.[12] In 1867, Hans began his military service as a one-year volunteer in the Pomeranian Jaegers Battalion No. 2 (Pommersches Jäger-Bataillon Nr. 2), which was stationed in Greifswald. He completed his service with the rank of junior sergeant (*Vizefeldwebel*). While Hans was serving, his father received an honorary doctorate from the University of Greifswald (Universität Greifswald) in recognition of his tax law publications. Before leaving the army, Hans received news of Berthold's death on March 17, 1868. Since he had finished his military service by June, Hans was able to attend the funeral as a soldier.[13]

After being discharged from the army, Hans decided to resume his history studies, but his family's financial situation posed a problem. Fortunately, his uncles—banker Adalbert (1822–1890) and industrialist Hugo (1825–1900)—came to his aid and offered to cover the costs of his further education.[14] Most of Hans' family wanted him to return to Heidelberg. His godmother, Ida von Kahlden (1797–1872), who had previously financed his studies in 1867, promised to fund a scholarship for this purpose.[15] However, Hans chose the University of Greifswald because it was cheaper and closer to home. At just twenty years old, he became the symbolic head of the Delbrück family, responsible for fulfilling certain administrative and legal obligations.

During Hans' time studying in Greifswald, Karl von Noorden (1833–1883), his lecturer, played an important role in his life. Noorden was a friend of Hans' mother and a graduate of the Rhenish Friedrich Wilhelm University (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität) in Bonn. He made strenuous efforts to return there as a professor and succeeded in 1876. He convinced Laura Delbrück that Bonn was the best place for her son's education. He promised to help with Hans'

12 Martin Hobohm, *Hans Delbrück der Siebzigjährige*, *cit*., p. 16.

13 Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar. Für eine konservative Republik – gegen Kriegsschuldlüge und Dolchstoßlegende*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2018, p. 36.

14 Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, p. 28; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., p. 52; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 38; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 31–32.

15 Arden Bucholz, «Introduction,» *cit*., p. 2; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 31–32.

transfer and to intercede for him with Heinrich von Sybel (1817–1895), a renowned professor at the time and the editor-in-chief of *Historische Zeitschrift*, a journal founded in 1859.[16] Hans succumbed to the persuasions of his mother and Noorden. After studying in Greifswald for a year, Hans moved to Bonn and was admitted as a student for the 1869/1870 academic year. As promised, his uncles took on the burden of his upkeep.[17]

During his studies in Bonn, Delbrück chose not to join any student fraternities. He became known for boldly speaking out in discussions and questioning established views. His difficulty controlling his rebellious temperament also caused conflicts. In Bonn he had the opportunity to meet his contemporary, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931). Their relationship soon became unusual and dramatic.

In 1872, Delbrück challenged Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to a pistol duel by correspondence due to an alleged breach of honor. The scandal involved a homosexual incident among members of the Bonn Philological Society in 1869, and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was accused of violating an agreement to keep silent about the details. Although Delbrück was not a member of the Society, he likely tried to prevent Wilamowitz-Moellendorff from being granted an officer's rank after passing the relevant exam. The conflict began among students over related events but quickly spread beyond the university. The matter went before a military court of honor. Ultimately, the duel did not take place. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff gave his word to the district commander that he had not committed the act of which he was accused. His eldest brother, Hugo (1840–1905), who was chosen as his second, provided Delbrück with a written statement on the matter. Thus, Delbrück withdrew the challenge under the threat of dueling with Hugo as well and, if necessary, with Ulrich's other brothers too. The conflict was resolved, but there was never a reconciliation between the future professors, who later worked at the same university.[18]

16 Words of gratitude to Norden for his help: Hans Delbrück, Über die Glaubwürdigkeit Lamberts von Hersfeld, Weber, Bonn 1873, p. 78.

17 Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 28; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 38; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 32. Nothing is known about financial participation from the godmother, contrary to what Krasuski wrote about it: Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., p. 52.

18 This topic has been extensively described (along with reprints of source excerpts) by: Stephan

Karl von Noorden (1833–1883).

Delbrück's adherence to the principles of the officer's code of honor did not stem solely from his military service from 1867 to 1868. In 1872, he appeared before Wilamowitz-Moellendorff as a reserve lieutenant who had been awarded the Iron Cross Second Class. He was promoted for his participation in the long-awaited Franco-Prussian War, which broke out two years earlier.

Delbrück was assigned to the Second Rhenish Infantry Regiment, No. 28 (2. Rheinisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 28), for mobilization.[19] The letters he sent to his mother during the war period offer interesting insights into the feelings of a young intellectual who temporarily left his academic life behind to confront the fear and death that accompany every war. He witnessed firsthand how the soldiers' initial enthusiasm turned into doubt and reluctance to participate in combat.[20] His words about discipline being the last effective barrier against disobeying orders are poignant.[21] At the same time, his descriptions reveal attempts to maintain humanity by conversing with officers and the chaplain about the history of Christianity while avoiding topics related to the war.[22]

Delbrück's most dramatic war experience was participating in the Battle of Gravelotte on August 18, 1870. The next day, he wrote a letter to his mother describing the course of battle. Despite his regiment coming under massive gunfire and suffering heavy losses, he remained unharmed. The officers had difficulty gathering the scattered unit, and matters worsened as darkness fell. Amid the chaos, Delbrück mistakenly joined a different infantry unit. Panic broke out, and

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Heilen, «Der Mann, der Wilamowitz zum Duell zwingen wollte: Neue Quellen zu einer bisher unklaren Stelle der Erinnerungen,» *RhM*, 145, 3–4, 2002, pp. 374–426. Delbrück's violent reaction may have stemmed from his personal acquaintance with the protagonist of the moral scandal, which, according to a collectively made promise, was to remain a secret. See *ibid*., pp. 399–404.

19 The double numbering was the result of his incorporation into the Prussian military structures in 1815, where it received the new number 28: Wilhelm Neff, *Geschichte des Infanterie-Regiments von Goeben (2. Rheinischen) Nr. 28*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1890, pp. 1, 19.

20 Hans Delbrück, «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» in Arden Bucholz (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, pp. 44 (letter of July 29, 1870), 45 (letter of August 11), 48 (letter of August 24), 49 (letter of September 5).

21 *Ibid*., p. 49 (letters of September 5 and 11).

22 *Ibid*., p. 44 (letter of July 29).

the German troops were fired upon.[23] Years later, Delbrück expressed irritation at the patriotic accounts portraying the Battle of Gravelotte as an expression of unparalleled Prussian heroism and military superiority.[24]

In his letter, Delbrück discreetly omitted an important detail: during the battle, he had carried out the order to bring reinforcements to the encircled unit by personally leading a counterattack. His courage shown on the battlefield earned him a promotion to lieutenant and the Iron Cross Second Class. In later years, he proudly displayed this decoration because it distinguished him from people like Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who was kept in reserve throughout the war due to his high social standing. However, Delbrück was not consumed by class resentment, even though he was critical of the privilege enjoyed by people like Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.[25]

Delbrück participated in the Siege of Metz, but he contracted typhoid fever in late November, ending his involvement in the war. Initially admitted to a field hospital near Compiègne, he was later transferred to a hospital in Bonn. In January 1871, his condition stabilized, and he was discharged to undergo rehabilitation at home. He never returned to the front.

During the Franco-Prussian War, Peter von Henning (1843–1870), his mother's younger brother, was fatally wounded near Sedan.

In a letter dated August 24, Delbrück wrote about losing all enthusiasm for the ongoing war.[26] He acknowledged that the outcome was a significant achievement for Bismarck's policies. Contrary to what some historians have written, recognizing the "Iron Chancellor's" effectiveness did not alter Delbrück's negative opinion of Bismarck's actions.[27] At most, it temporarily softened his criticism. Delbrück openly admitted to having nurtured an aversion to Bismarck for many years, instilled in him by his father.[28]

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23 *Ibid*., pp. 45–48. Interestingly, parts of the letter were modeled on Leo Tolstoy's (1828–1910) description of the Battle of Austerlitz (1805): Arden Bucholz, «Introduction,» *cit*., pp. 18–19.

24 Hans Delbrück, «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» *cit*., p. 49 (letter of September 11).

25 Stephan Heilen, «Der Mann,» *cit*., pp. 406–411.

26 Hans Delbrück, «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» *cit*., p. 48.

27 Id., «Constantin Rößler,» *PJ*, 90, 1897, pp. 191–192, 204–207; Id., «Danksagung,» *PJ*, 174, 1918, pp. 443–444.

28 Id., *Krieg und Politik*, 3, *1917–1918*, Stilke, Berlin 1919, p. 226; Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 16.

After being demobilized, Delbrück returned to the University of Bonn, where he remained until earning his doctorate in 1873. His dissertation, Über die Glaubwürdigkeit Lamberts von Hersfeld, was supervised by Sybel. Delbrück dedicated his thesis to the work of Lambert of Hersfeld (c. 1028–1082/1085), an eleventh-century chronicler who had previously been considered a reliable historical source. Notably, it was the first doctoral dissertation in the history of the Faculty of Philosophy to be written in German instead of Latin. In it, Delbrück revealed the polemical temperament for which he would soon become famous. He mercilessly attacked Lambert's credibility and the findings of an earlier researcher, Wilhelm von Giesebrecht (1814–1889), who had also studied Lambert. The dissertation was defended with the highest honors (*maxima cum laude*) and published the same year.[29]

Delbrück's doctoral thesis was not related to military history. Rather, it was a traditional source study in medieval studies requiring a strong grasp of philological methods. The skills he acquired in Bonn would prove extremely valuable to him in the future. He never returned to similar topics, instead leaning toward describing long-term historical processes.

Working on his doctoral dissertation did not result in a lasting connection with his supervisor. Although Delbrück spoke about him respectfully, he did not seek to maintain contact with him.[30] Delbrück was critical of the historiographical visions and political views promoted by Sybel.[31] The respected professor adhered to romanticized nationalism and held Friedrich II (Frederick the Great; 1712–1786) in high regard. He also supported Bismarck's political agenda. For a young man raised in an atmosphere of democratic values, Sybel's attitude was difficult to accept, especially since, as later publications indicate, Delbrück did not share an uncritical admiration for the most famous Prussian monarch despite his family's deep respect for Friedrich II.[32] Delbrück also rejected the chauvinism toward other nations apparent in Sybel's work—a sentiment not altered by his participation in the Franco-Prussian War.[33]

29 Hans Delbrück, Über die Glaubwürdigkeit Lamberts, *cit*.

30 E.g., Id., «Die Fortführung des Sybel'schen Werkes,» *PJ*, 66, 1890, pp. 83–86.

31 Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, *cit*., pp. 185–186.

32 Hans Delbrück, «Danksagung,» *cit*., p. 442.

33 More broadly on the evolution of Sybel's historiographical and historiosophical views, closely linked to his political involvement: Volker Dotterweich, *Heinrich von Sybel. Geschichtswis-*

Heinrich von Sybel (1817–1895).

1.2. The road to habilitation degree (1873–1881)

In 1873, the recently graduated doctor moved to Berlin, where he found a job as a private tutor with the help of his mother's family. Delbrück's plans for the immediate future are unclear. Without the connections in academia, he would have likely ended up teaching high school.[34] Uncle Rudolph was reluctant to help him. Another uncle, Clemens Delbrück (1856–1921; von Delbrück from 1916), who was much more favorably disposed toward Hans, was not due to arrive in Berlin until 1905.[35]

In 1874, Delbrück was ordered to report for military maneuvers in Wittenberg. He probably did not expect how greatly they would affect his life. There, he came across a book in the regimental library by Colonel Wilhelm Rüstow (1821–1878) titled *Geschichte der Infanterie*.[36] Rüstow was one of the most prominent nineteenth-century military authors writing about topics ranging from antiquity to contemporary warfare. Reading Rüstow's work made a big impression on Delbrück, sparking his interest in military history. Years later, he recalled the event of 1874 as one of the most important in the development of his academic career.[37]

Upon returning from maneuvers, Delbrück unexpectedly received an offer to become the tutor of six-year-old Prince Waldemar (1868–1879), the son of

senschaft in politischer Absicht (1817–1861), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1978, pp. 167–319. In shorter form: Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, 2nd ed., Wesleyan University Press, Middleton 1983, pp. 116–123; Robert Southard, *Droysen and the Prussian School of History*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington 1995, pp. 97–111; Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, wyd. 3, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2011, pp. 493–495.

34 Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., p. 54; Arden Bucholz, «Introduction,» *cit*., p. 5; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 39; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 34.

35 He moved to the capital in connection with his appointment as Minister of Social Policy and head of the mining administration in the Prussian government. In 1909, he became Secretary of State for the Interior. In 1914, he became Vice-President of the Prussian State Ministry. He held the latter position until 1916. For more information on the stages of his political career, see Gerhard Ritter, «Delbrück, Clemens von,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 3, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1957, pp. 575–576.

36 Wilhelm Rüstow, *Geschichte der Infanterie*, 1–2, Scheube, Gotha 1857–1858.

37 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. LIII. Cf. Id., «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *PJ*, 60, 1887, pp. 611–612.

Crown Prince Friedrich (1831–1888). In 1888, Friedrich was crowned Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia as Friedrich III. Delbrück decided to accept the prestigious and lucrative offer.[38] His mother was particularly keen on his choice, hoping that he would become more refined and shed his hotheadedness in the courtly environment.[39] Delbrück owed his new position to the patronage of Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), whom he met upon arriving in Berlin.[40] Virchow was one of the figures who left a clear mark on Delbrück's life, but nothing is known about their subsequent interactions.

Delbrück had the appropriate references for such a responsible job. These included his education and the experience he had gained in the field of tutoring. In 1872, he was hired as a tutor for the Swedish prince Gustav (later King Gustav V; 1858–1950), who was staying with his guardians at the Neuwied Castle. There, Delbrück encountered court etiquette and the high-ranking politicians and officers who accompanied the heir to the throne.[41]

In 1888, Delbrück's extensive memoirs of his time at Friedrich's court were published in *Preußische Jahrbücher*.[42] The memoirs are an interesting testament

38 Id., «Persönliche Erinnerungen an Kaiser Friedrich und sein Haus,» *PJ*, 62, 1888, p. 97; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, *cit*., pp. LIII–LIV.

39 Letter of April 17, 1894, quoted by: Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker der Wilhelminischen Epoche*, Droste, Düsseldorf 1955, p. 9; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., p. 54.

40 Arden Bucholz, «Introduction,» *cit*., p. 5; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 39; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 34. Some authors claim that the person responsible for nominating Delbrück was Franz von Roggenbach (1825–1907): Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., p. 9; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., p. 54; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 328. However, he was not a court member recommending Delbrück but the person responsible for the initial selection of candidates. An even more common mistake is confusing Virchow with Rudolph von Delbrück, solely based on the similarity of their first names (Rudolf—Rudolph).

41 Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 102; Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 8–9; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., p. 54; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 24; Id., «Introduction,» *cit*., p. 4; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹. Kriegführung und Kriegsgeschichte in der Kontroverse 1879–1914*, Rombach, Freiburg im Breisgau 1995, p. 32; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 38; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 34.

42 Hans Delbrück, «Persönliche Erinnerungen,» *cit*.

to his attachment to the Crown Prince and document his meetings and travels to France, Italy, and Great Britain. However, they disappointingly say little about the nature of Delbrück's work and its influence on the development of his historical interests. The preface of one of his books provides more insight into his relationship with the heir to the throne and his circle.[43]

Friedrich quickly found common ground with his son's tutor. As a veteran of the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars, Friedrich sparked Delbrück's interest in military history. He recommended Delbrück read Carl von Clausewitz's (1870–1831) book *Vom Kriege*.[44] Delbrück later spoke admiringly of the Crown Prince's character and knowledge. Friedrich was deeply attached to Prussian military traditions and opposed the idea of subordinating the army to the Reichstag.[45] Similarly, General Leonhard von Blumenthal (1810–1900), who was made a field marshal in 1888, made a positive impression on Delbrück. The young historian gained many valuable insights into "commander's psychology" (*Armee-Kommandos psychologie*) from both men. Their conversations inspired him to dedicate himself to military history.[46] Discussions with generals who periodically visited the court were also meant to aid him in this endeavor.[47]

In 1877, with the consent of the Crown Prince, Delbrück accepted Hedwig M. von Brühl's (1835–1905) offer to complete the biography of her ancestor, Field Marshal Neidhardt von Gneisenau (1760–1831).[48] Georg H. Pertz (1795–1876) had begun the biography, but due to his chronic illness, which resulted in his death, only the first three volumes were published.[49] Delbrück continued the narrative up to 1831 and wrote the last two volumes.[50] Gneisenau's unique position in the Prussian military system during the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic eras provided Delbrück with invaluable experience in his newly chosen field.

43 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LIII–LIV.

44 *Ibid*., p. LIV. On the conversations held with Friedrich about military matters in general: Id., «Persönliche Erinnerungen,» *cit*., pp. 111–114.

45 *Ibid*., pp. 106–107, 108.

46 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIV.

47 *Ibid*.

48 Id., «Persönliche Erinnerungen,» *cit*., p. 111; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIII.

49 Georg H. Pertz, *Das Leben des Feldmarchalls Grafen Neithardt von Gneisenau*, 1–3, Reimer, Berlin 1864–1869.

50 Hans Delbrück, *Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen Neithardt von Gneisenau*, 1–2 (Gesamtwerkes, 4–5), Reimer, Berlin 1880.

In connection with the biography he was preparing and Friedrich's suggestions, Delbrück published his first article in the field of military history, which was dedicated to Clausewitz.[51]

Delbrück worked as a tutor until 1879, when Waldemar passed away from diphtheria at the age of 11.[52] His five years at the imperial court were certainly not wasted. He met important people from political and military circles, observed how the ruler's entourage functioned, and learned how to cooperate with Bismarck. Friedrich disliked Bismarck, who also disliked Friedrich.[53] Delbrück gained the sympathy of the Crown Prince, who secured his support in 1880 for his appointment as an associate professor at the University of Berlin. Friedrich wrote a letter to the Prussian Minister of Culture, Gustav von Gossler (1838–1902), requesting him to submit a formal application on Delbrück's behalf. Gossler promised his support for the cause, but he also suggested hiring a professional officer from the Great General Staff to lecture on military history. After Friedrich declined, Gossler submitted the relevant application to the University of Berlin authorities in 1880.[54]

The Faculty of Philosophy commission, chaired by Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), rejected Delbrück's application, seeing no grounds for awarding him such a special distinction.[55] The failure left Delbrück with the traditional option of obtaining a habilitation degree.

Even though the path to academic advancement was traditional, the idea for the habilitation subject certainly could not be considered as such. Despite military history being the exclusive domain of the officer corps, Delbrück conceived the idea of incorporating it into university curricula.[56] As a reminder,

51 Id., «Clausewitz,» *ZpGL*, 15, 1878, pp. 217–231.

52 Id., «Persönliche Erinnerungen,» *cit*., pp. 97, 101–102; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIII.

53 Id., «Persönliche Erinnerungen,» *cit*., p. 105.

54 Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 26–27.

55 Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 55–56; Hans Schleier, «Treitschke, Delbrück und die *Preußischen Jahrbücher*,» *Jahrbuch für Geschichte*, 1, 1967, pp. 137–138; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 27; Id., «Introduction,» *cit*., p. 10; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 3; Id., «Hans Delbrück: Der Kritiker,» *cit*., p. 13 n. 10; Wilhelm Deist, «Hans Delbrück. Militärhistoriker und Publizist,» *MZ*, 57, 1998, p. 374.

56 Hans Delbrück, «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*., pp. 606–607.

Emperor Friedrich III (1831–1888).

he was only given the rank of reserve lieutenant in 1870.[57] In the eyes of the German military historical service, his achievements did not demonstrate the necessary competence to address military issues. Given Delbrück's initial difficulties, Friedrich's open-mindedness becomes all the more important; he held no such prejudices and recognized his son's tutor as a man capable of making a historical breakthrough (as evidenced by the support he provided in 1880 to help him obtain a professorship). Delbrück applied for habilitation in 1881. He submitted the two volumes of Gneisenau's biography as his main work.[58]

Before doing so, he contacted Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), the doyen of German historians, whose authority was beyond question. Upon hearing about Delbrück's idea, Ranke expressed strong disapproval, stating that universities were not places for writing about warfare.[59] Delbrück was not discouraged by Ranke's response, which speaks to his great courage and self-confidence, as well as his potentially dangerous lack of humility. Despite Ranke's attempt to torpedo the young doctor's concept, the doyen of German professors did not hide his positive feelings about the meeting. He even said: "One day he will be my successor" (*Der wird einmal mein Nachfolger*).[60]

Ultimately, Delbrück submitted his habilitation application to the authorities of the Philosophical Faculty at Berlin University. Delbrück's recent attempt to obtain the title of associate professor likely did not make the best impression on the professors there.

As expected, the habilitation application was rejected for formal reasons. The committee members did not consider the history of the art of war to be an academic specialty. Therefore, they could not evaluate the candidate's achievements.[61] Delbrück overheard in a private conversation that he should change his field of interest because it was considered a popular topic among peasants.[62] Delbrück did not give up. He prepared an appeal. Although the contents of the appeal are lost, it was finally sent for processing and was successful. What argu-

57 In 1885, Delbrück was retired: Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, [p. IX].

58 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIV; *ibid*., 4, [p. X].

59 *Ibid*.

60 Martin Hobohm, *Hans Delbrück der Siebzigjährige*, *cit.*, p. 6.

61 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. X].

62 Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit.*, p. 136.

ments did Delbrück use to convince the committee to change its mind? Knowing the answer would provide more insight into the process of gaining academic acceptance for military history, a field closely linked to prominent figures in Prussian history, such as Friedrich II.

In 1881, the habilitation committee awarded Delbrück the title of Doctor Habilitatus of Philosophy in the field of universal history.[63] His success meant much more than just his advancement in the academic hierarchy. For the first time, the study of human military activity was formally recognized as a useful means of understanding the past. Until then, military issues had only been present in German academic historiography as a consequence of political decisions. From then on, they would also become the subject of independent analysis. Years later, Delbrück stated with satisfaction that new ideas always face initial resistance, but he had managed to break through the wall of reluctance and misunderstanding.[64]

Gneisenau's biography proved to be a ticket to the University of Berlin when Delbrück obtained a position as a private lecturer during the 1881–1882 academic year.[65] To further his goal of increasing tolerance for military history, Delbrück chose an emotionally charged and interesting topic for his lectures. His risky move could foreshadow problems with the Faculty of Philosophy authorities and the Department of Universal History staff to which he was assigned.

1.3. Academic activity in the years 1881–1914

For the winter semester, Delbrück proposed a lecture topic concerning the course of the Austro-Prussian War.[66] His choice caused a stir among the lecturers because the war had occurred only 15 years prior. In the eyes of many scholars, only professional officers could analyze it competently. The dean intervened, demanding the organization of a lecture series dedicated to habilitation issues.[67]

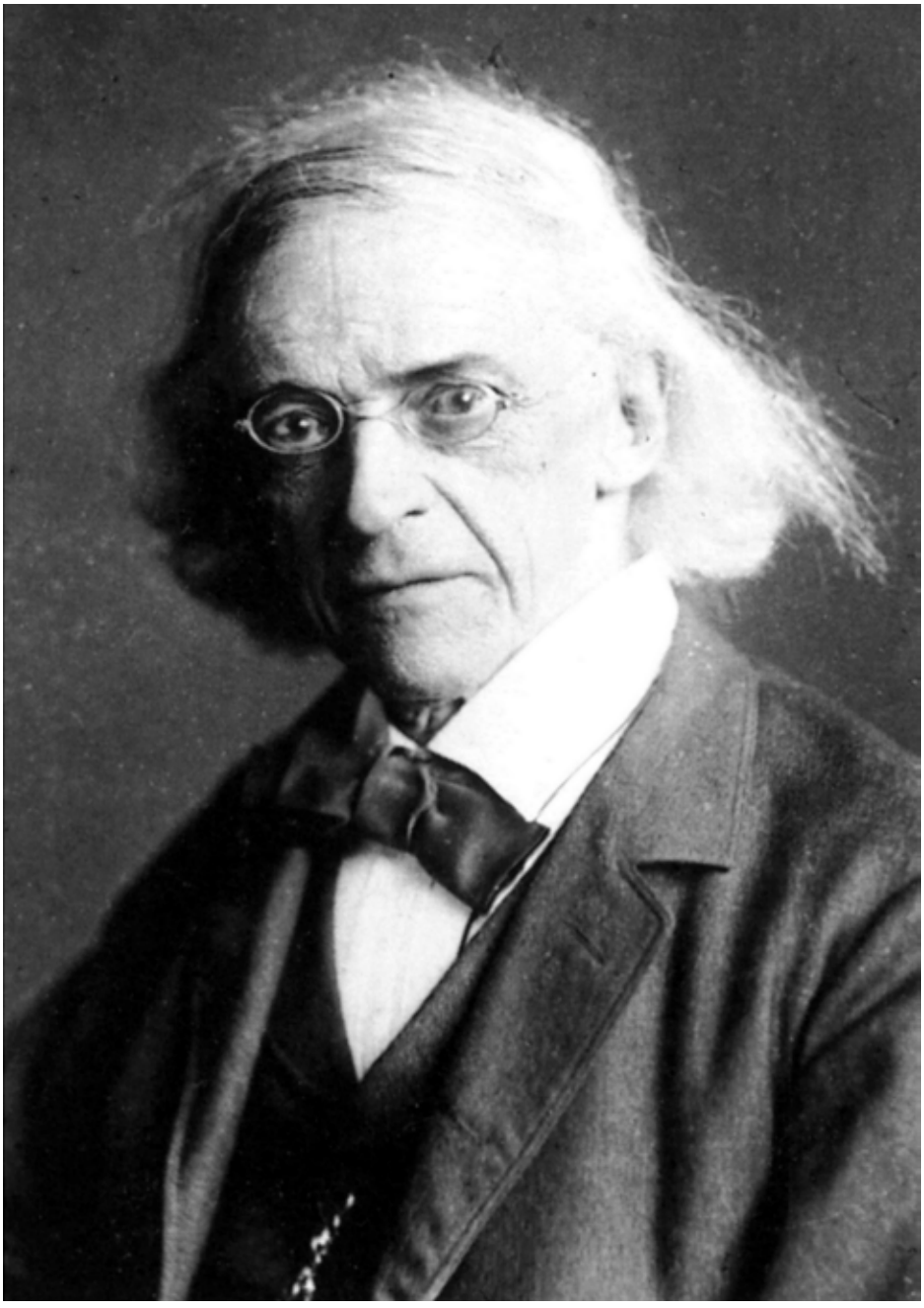
63 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIV.

64 *Ibidem*, 4, [p. X].

65 *Ibidem*, 1, p. LIV; Emil Daniels, Konrad Lehmann, Gustav Roloff, «Vorwort,» in Freunden und Schülern (ed.), *Delbrück-Festschrift. Gesammelte Aufsätze, Professor Hans Delbrück zu seinem sechzigsten Geburtstage (11 November 1908)*, Stilke, Berlin 1908, p. 9.

66 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIV.

67 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., p. 9; Dieter Hertz-Eichenrode, «Die



Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903).

Unsuccessfully. The students reacted enthusiastically to Delbrück's lecture offer. From his first year of teaching, he could regularly count on a full auditorium of listeners[68] drawn not only by the engaging topic but also by his rejection of the romanticized view of war.[69]

The popularity among students encouraged Delbrück to take bolder steps. During the summer semester, he taught a class on the development of European military institutions from the rise of feudalism to the German wars of unification. It was not until the summer semester of the 1882/1883 academic year that he dared to address the topic of antiquity, proposing a lecture on the universal history of military institutions and the art of war from the Persian Wars to his own time. Subsequently, he taught courses on the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, selected topics in strategy and tactics, major battles at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the influence of the economy on war.[70]

Undeterred by the lack of acceptance from most of his colleagues, Delbrück began publishing articles on ancient and Prussian Enlightenment military history. In 1883, Max Lehmann (1845–1929), a friend of Delbrück's since their time in Bonn, proposed him for the position of second editor of *Preußische Jahrbücher*. Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896), the head of the Department of Universal History at the University of Berlin, edited the journal from 1866.

„Neuere Geschichte" an der Berliner Universität. Historiker und Geschichtsschreibung im 19./20. Jahrhundert,» in Reimer Hansen, Wolfgang Ribbe (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Berlin im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Persönlichkeiten und Institutionen*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1992, p. 282.

68 Delbrück never impeded women from enrolling in his classes, a stance that was apparently uncommon at the time: Jonas Klein, «Hans Delbrücks ‚unbekannte' Schüler – Wissenschaftliche Schulen als Beharrungsfaktor der Hochschulentwicklung,» in Edith Glaser, Carola Groppe, Jürgen Overhoff (ed.), *Universitäten und Hochschulen zwischen Beharrung und Reform. Bildungshistorische Perspektiven*, Klinkhardt, Bad Heilbrunn 2024, p. 117 n. 1.

69 Emil Daniels, Konrad Lehmann, Gustav Roloff, «Vorwort,» *cit*., p. 11; Arthur Rosenberg, «Hans Delbrück. Der Kritiker der Kriegsgeschichte,» *Die Gesellschaft*, 6, 2, 1929, pp. 250, 252; Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 104; Axel von Harnack, «Hans Delbrück als Historiker und Politiker,» *Neue Rundschau*, 63, 1952, p. 421; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., p. 56. In a letter to his brother Max dated May 26, 1867, Delbrück wrote that pathos falsifies history: Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 19. On Delbrück's reluctance to idealize and romanticize the image of the past: Friedrich Meinecke, *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin 1901–1919. Erinnerungen*, Koehler, Stuttgart 1949, p. 156.

70 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LIV–LV.

Over time, he needed the support of a younger colleague.[71] The new position provided Delbrück with an additional platform through which to disseminate his historical and political views.

The editors of *Preußische Jahrbücher* published a wide range of texts on politics, history, and culture, with a circulation of up to 2,000 copies. The main recipients of the journal were politicians, the Berlin intelligentsia, and mid-level officials.

Treitschke's collaboration with Delbrück was not a good idea. Serious political differences soon emerged between them, leading to Treitschke's departure in 1889. The journal's owner, Ernst H. Reimer (1833–1897), ultimately decided to remove the longtime editor because he was unhappy with his increasing political radicalism.[72] Delbrück recounted a joke about Treitschke, who supposedly categorized people as either scoundrels or Prussians.[73] In fact, Delbrück also identified the German *raison d'état* with the interests of Prussia, presenting a strong pro-state perspective. However, like Reimer, he was uncomfortable with attempts to reduce discourse to promoting a single ideological perspective at the expense of others.

Treitschke never forgave Delbrück for taking his position. Ironically, he referred to Delbrück as "Hans Tapps," comparing him to the clumsy giant from legend. By doing so, Treitschke implied that the overly bold private lecturer was unfamiliar with the art of diplomacy, a highly valued quality among Berlin professors.[74]

In 1899, Delbrück announced the final revision of the journal's profile. From then on, authors were to focus on objective explanations of reality, and most published texts were to be political and historical analyses. *Preußische Jahrbücher* had already closed its doors to the type of articles Treitschke allowed,

71 Sibylle Obenaus, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1848–1880*, Springer, Stuttgart 1987, pp. 56–60; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 51–52, 62.

72 Hans Delbrück, «Abschied,» *PJ*, 178, 1919, p. 369. Extensively on the relationship between Delbrück and Treitschke: Hans Schleier, «Treitschke, Delbrück,» *cit*.; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 51–57. See also Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, *cit*., pp. 184–186, 196.

73 Hans Delbrück, «Auswärtiges,» in Id., *Vor und nach Dem Weltkrieg. Politische und Historische Aufsätze 1902–1925*, Stollberg & Company, Berlin 1926, p. 221.

74 Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, *cit*., p. 184.

which contained chauvinistic content, particularly anti-Polish, anti-French, and anti-Semitic. Furthermore, Delbrück rejected texts characterized by nationalist propaganda and Prussian particularism.[75] Since then, *Preußische Jahrbücher* has permanently transformed into a quasi-expert journal particularly eager to publish studies submitted by academics.[76] Delbrück frequently published his own articles, as well as those of his colleagues and students.

Editing *Preußische Jahrbücher* was time-consuming and exhausting, yet it did not stop Delbrück from establishing military history as a legitimate historical specialty. Pursuing this goal could not be achieved by simply transferring Rüstow's approach to the university setting because it did not align with its specific nature. Delbrück had to break away from the "general staff perspective" and the belief in the utilitarian function of research. Delbrück proposed his own approach, which he first presented in his extensive 1887 article, *Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches*.[77] The core of his idea was to study military affairs in close connection with the overall phenomena occurring in a given era—i.e., political, social, economic, and cultural aspects. Delbrück placed a strong emphasis on source studies as a starting point for understanding past events.[78] According to Delbrück, an officer is to a military historian as an artist is to an art historian. Thus, an officer is a creator, not an interpreter.[79] He can draw conclusions, but he lacks the ability to explain the past. Consequently, both perspectives are valuable, as they complement each other, allowing for a deeper understanding of military matters.[80]

While Delbrück's stance is not controversial today, it challenged the officers' monopoly on the study of military history at the time. Did the novice historian and reserve officer consider civilian scholars to be as competent as the military historical service? It was a thoroughly seditious stance, and agreeing with Delbrück required many to overcome mental barriers.

Delbrück's insistence on an alternative approach to studying military issues

75 Hans Delbrück, *Krieg und Politik*, 1, *1914–1916*, Stilke, Berlin 1918, p. 3.

76 Id., «Das Programm der Preußischen Jahrbücher,» *PJ*, 95, 1899, pp. 478–497.

77 Id., «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*.

78 More broadly on Delbrück's historiographical views, see Chapter 2.

79 *Ibid*., pp. 610–611.

80 *Ibid*., p. 610.

prompted fierce criticism from the German military historical service.[81] General Colmar von der Goltz (1843–1916) was the first to question Delbrück's competence on a topic allegedly understandable to civilians.[82] In response, Delbrück published a historical outline of the Prussian officer corps' evolution, beginning with the time of Friedrich II. He demonstrated that intellectual aspirations had never been a criterion for admission to or promotion in the service. Therefore, the officer corps could not be compared to the academic community in terms of research potential.[83] Despite his confrontational stance, Delbrück won over an influential group of supporters within the officer corps, including Generals Sigismund von Schlichting (1829–1909), Alfred von Schlieffen (1833–1913), Hugo von Freytag-Loringhoven (1855–1924),[84] Erich von Falkenhayn (1861–1922), and Wilhelm Groener (1867–1939). They sometimes interpreted Delbrück's arguments very traditionally, overlooking important aspects of his concept. For example, Groener considered the development of the historical pedigree of the double envelopment maneuver to be one such aspect.[85]

The first two books of Delbrück's academic work were based on the comparative method, shocking many readers at the time. In 1887, he compared the military institutions of ancient Athens with those of medieval Burgundy and Switzerland.[86] Then, in 1890, he compared the Athenians' strategy during the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE) with Friedrich II's solutions during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763).[87] No one had dared such extravagances until then,

81 See Chapter 4.

82 Colmar von der Goltz, «Antikritik,» *ZpGL*, 16, 1879, pp. 292–304.

83 Hans Delbrück, «Die preußischen Offizierstand,» *PJ*, 52, 1883, pp. 321–338.

84 Freytag-Loringhoven is often portrayed as an opponent of Delbrück's historiographical model because the two engaged in several polemics. It is worth noting that their disagreements concerned detailed interpretations. Unlike many officers, Freytag-Loringhoven never questioned the validity of studying military affairs at universities. He and Delbrück always conducted their arguments with mutual respect for cultural norms and, equally importantly, with an understanding of each other's work. See Antulio J. Echevarria II, «General Staff Historian Hugo Freiherr von Freytag-Loringhoven and the Dialectics of German Military Thought,» *JMH*, 60, 3, 1996, pp. 471–494.

85 Wilhelm Groener, «Delbrück und die Kriegswissenschaften,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, p. 38.

86 Hans Delbrück, *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege. Zwei combinierte kriegsgeschichtliche Studien*, Walther & Apolant, Berlin 1887.

87 Id., *Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen*, Reimer,

leaving Delbrück's opponents helpless. His publications were so innovative that there was no tradition of academic debate on such topics.[88] The novelty gave Delbrück a monopoly among civilian researchers and sometimes allowed him to smuggle in controversial interpretations with impunity.

The comparative studies were a result of the topics he lectured on. The cross-sectional approach revealed similarities and differences in the strategic and tactical concepts employed over the centuries. To reach the correct conclusions, it would have been necessary to faithfully reproduce the conditions resulting from the social environment.[89] Consequently, Delbrück relied on analogies and implementation inspirations, confusing most "historians in military uniforms," who lacked in-depth knowledge of the specific characteristics of a given era and cultural area.[90] Over time, a new generation of scholars came to fully understand Delbrück's intentions and methods of description. For Delbrück and his followers, military history could only be presented from an evolutionary perspective and not through meaningless compilations of quotes from famous commanders or assertions of eternal supremacy. Delbrück was much more interested in historical processes, especially those related to the recurrence of certain ideas.

At the beginning of his academic career, Delbrück developed a particular fondness for antiquity, an era considered the most prestigious in Germany.[91] His

Berlin 1890.

88 Wilhelm Groener, «Delbrück und die Kriegswissenschaften,» *cit*., p. 35. Cf. Karl Christ, «Einleitung zum Nachdruck der dritten Auflage von 1964,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. 694.

89 On the essence and usefulness of the comparative method: Hans Delbrück, «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*., pp. 611, 613.

90 Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 14–15; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Heroic History and Vicarious War: Nineteenth-Century German Military Writing,» *The Historian*, 59, 3, 1997, p. 587; Sven Lange, «Hans Delbrück: Der Kritiker,» *cit*., pp. 9–10.

91 The strong philosophical roots of German humanism led to a search for the origins of individual phenomena and institutions in antiquity. At that time, appeals were made to Christianity, the Greco-Roman heritage (with a particular focus on Sparta), and ideas about the unique nature of Germanic communities. The fascination with antiquity was reflected in the education system, which aimed not only to impart knowledge and shape students' morals. Therefore, scholars specializing in antiquity occupied a unique position among academics, including philosophers and theologians. See Karl Christ, *Klios Wandlungen. Die deutsche Althistorie*

interest was closely linked to his future publishing plans, as well as his awareness of the era's importance as a major source of inspiration until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The range of topics he covered was naturally limited by the quantity and type of surviving sources. He devoted the most attention to Athens[92] and the Roman Republic, primarily emphasizing tactical issues.[93] Dealing with antiquity was a real test of his skills, especially since nineteenth-century Germany was considered a bastion of classical studies, including philology, history, linguistics, and aesthetics. At the University of Berlin, Delbrück had the opportunity to work with Mommsen, the first Nobel laureate in history.[94]

Delbrück never intended to abandon the theme of Friedrich II. He published additional studies on the Seven Years' War and the relevance of eighteenth-century military concepts in an era of war's mechanization.[95]

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vom Neuhumanismus bis zur Gegenwart, Beck, München 2006; Stefan Rebenich, *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike. Eine wechselvolle Beziehung*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 2021. Over time, the situation began to change. Supporters of basing the future prosperity of nations on recent history increasingly gained influence.

92 Hans Delbrück, *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege*, *cit*.; Id., *Die Strategie des Perikles*, *cit*.; Id., «Neues aus Marathon,» *HZ*, 65 (3), 1890, pp. 465–468.

93 Id., «Die römische Manipulartaktik,» *HZ*, 51, 2, 1883, pp. 239–264; Id., «Die Manipularlegion und die Schlacht bei Cannae,» *Hermes*, 21, 1, 1886, pp. 65–90; Id., *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege*, *cit*., pp. 269–308; Id., «Triarier und Leichtbewaffnete,» *HZ*, 60, 2, 1888, pp. 238–254.

94 Due to the lack of a suitable category in 1902, Mommsen was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature: The Nobel Prize [Literature], https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/lists/all-nobel-prizes-in-literature [26.07.2023].

95 Hans Delbrück, «Friedrich der Große als Feldherr,» *ZpGL*, 18, 1881, pp. 541–573; Id., rev. *Geschichte des Preußischen Staatswesens vom Tode Friederichs des Großen bis zu den Freiheitskriegen*. Von Martin Philippson, *ZpGL*, 18, 1881, pp. 35–58; rev. *Friedrich der Große als Feldherr*. Von Theodor v. Bernhardi. Zwei Bände. Berlin, Mittler & Sohn. 1881; *Zur Beurteilung des Siebenjährigen Krieges*. Von A. v. Taysen. Berlin, Mittler & Sohn. 1882; *Friedrichs des Großen Feldzugsplan für das Jahr 1757*. Vortrag, gehalten zur Feier des Geburtstages Friedrichs des Großen in der Militärischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin von Cämmerer. Berlin, Mittler & Sohn. 1883, *HZ*, 52, 1, 1884, pp. 155–159; Id., «Die methodische Kriegführung Friedrichs des Großen,» *PJ*, 43, 1884, pp. 195–212; Id., Über den Feldzugsplan Friedrichs des Großen im Jahre 1757, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1887; Id., «Über die Verschiedenheit der Strategie Friedrichs und Napoleons,» in Id., *Historische und politische Aufsätze*, Walther & Apolant, Berlin, 1887, pp. 227–305; Id., «Ein Beitrag zur Beurteilung der Kriegführung Friedrichs des Großen,» *JdAM*, 66, 1888, pp. 69–90; Id., «Zur friderizianischen Strategie,» *JdAM*, 67, 1888, pp. 220–221; Id., «Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen,» *PJ*, 64, 1889, pp. 258–305, 450–486, 503–528; Id., *Die Strategie des Perikles*, *cit*.; Id., *Friedrich, Napoleon, Moltke. Ältere und neuere Strategie. Im Anschluß an die Bern-*

General Colmar von der Goltz (1843–1916).

Before 1900, Delbrück's personal and professional life had stabilized. In 1882, he married Lina (Carolina) Thiersch (1864–1943), the daughter of Karl Thiersch (1822–1895). Like Delbrück, Karl Thiersch participated in the Franco-Prussian War as a member of the medical service. Hans and Lina had seven children: Lore (Laura; 1890–1983), Waldemar (1892–1917), Hani (Johanna; 1896–1993), Lene (Helene; 1898–1980), Justus (1902–1945), Emmi (Emilie; 1905–1975), and Max (1906–1981).[96] Lina's older sister, Amalie (1858–1937), married the prominent theologian and church historian Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930). The marriage brought Delbrück closer to Harnack through family ties. Because Harnack had a good relationship with Mommsen, the latter eventually accepted Delbrück's presence in his circle. Mommsen began supporting Delbrück's career and even maintained contact with him outside of the university.[97]

Good relations with Mommsen and Harnack helped Delbrück obtain his coveted position as an associate professor in 1895. The position was granted to him at the request of Friedrich Althoff (1839–1908), the head of the university department in the Prussian Ministry of Culture. After Treitschke's death a year later, Delbrück was offered a full professorship and the headship of the Department of Universal History.[98]

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hardische Schrift »Delbrück, Friedrich der Große und Clausewitz«, Walther, Berlin 1892.

96 Max Delbrück was a world-renowned geneticist, microbiologist, and biophysicist who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1969 as part of a research team: The Nobel Prize [Physiology or Medicine], https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/lists/all-nobel-laureates-in-physiology-or-medicine [26.07.2023].

97 Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack. Wissenschaft und Politik im Berlin des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1997, pp. 393–394, 483, 536; Id., *Theodor Mommsen. Eine Biographie*, Beck, München 2002, p. 214; Christian Nottmeier, *Adolf von Harnack und die deutsche Politik 1890–1930. Eine biographische Studie zum Verhältnis von Protestantismus, Wissenschaft und Politik*, Mohr, Tübingen 2004, pp. 19, 119–120, 143–144. More broadly on the relationship between Delbrück and Harnack: Hartmut Lehmann, «Über vierzig Jahre kamen sie Sonntag für Sonntag, mit ihren Frauen, zusammen: Adolf von Harnack und Hans Delbrück,» in Kurt Nowak (ed.), *Adolf von Harnack 1851–1930*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2001, pp. 71–84.

98 Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., pp. 104–105; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 42–43; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» *cit*., p. 330; Alexander Demandt, «Alte Geschichte in Berlin 1810–1960,» in Reimer Hansen, Wolfgang Ribbe (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Berlin im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Persönlichkeiten und Institutionen*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1992, p. 178;

The event was not without its drama. Delbrück was originally supposed to receive a full professorship in 1895, when a monument to the deceased Friedrich III was unveiled in Berlin. His son and successor, Wilhelm II (1859–1941), was expected to attend the ceremony. The nomination was postponed when a prosecutor filed charges against Delbrück for insulting the police in an article published in *Preußische Jahrbücher*. For now, he received an extraordinary professorship instead. The case was not pursued further, and the scheduled trial never took place.[99] Most likely, the entire situation was intended to warn Althoff about the consequences of pursuing an overly independent policy and promoting scholars who were critical of the government's actions.[100]

In a handwritten account of the story, Delbrück admitted that Althoff had previously offered him a professorship in exchange for censoring *Preußische Jahrbücher*. It was a tempting prospect, especially for someone who had been a private lecturer since 1881. The decision cost Delbrück a great deal of anxiety, as his university career was on one side of the scale and his integrity on the other. Only the intervention of an unknown person from the imperial family forced Althoff to withdraw the offer.[101]

Despite being offered positions at the universities of Breslau (modern-day Wrocław; 1889) and Leipzig (1893), Delbrück worked at the University of Berlin until he retired in 1921. He became known as the "father of military history" because he was the first historian to receive a habilitation for a book on military matters. He was also the first military historian to receive a full university posi-

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Dieter Hertz-Eichenrode, «Die „Neuere Geschichte",» *cit*., p. 282; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 33; Wolfgang Hardtwig, «Neuzeithistorie in Berlin 1810–1918,» in Heinz-Elmar Tenorth (ed.), *Geschichte der Universität Unter den Linden*, 4, *Genese der Disziplinen. Konstitution der Universität*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2010, p. 292; Charles E. McClelland, «Öffentlicher Raum und politische Kultur,» in Heinz-Elmar Tenorth (ed.), *Geschichte der Universität Unter den Linden*. 1, *Gründung und Blütezeit der Universität zu Berlin 1810–1919*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2012, p. 572; Wilfried Nippel, «Delbrück, Hans,» in Peter Kuhlmann, Helmuth Schneider (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly*, Suppl. 6, *History of Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2014, p. 143; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 39; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 37.

99 Hans Delbrück, «Politische Korrespondenz,» *PJ*, 82, 1895, pp. 568–569.

100 Charles E. McClelland, «Berlin Historians and German Politics,» *Journal of Contemporary History*, 8, 3, 1973, p. 8; Id., «Öffentlicher Raum und politische Kultur,» *cit*., p. 572.

101 Id., «Berlin Historians and German Politics,» *cit.*, p. 8.

tion, which allowed him to teach many generations of students. Thanks to him, military studies became a legitimate subject of academic research, although many scholars were initially skeptical. Other historians who had published works on the Prussian Reform Movement of 1807 were happy to collaborate with Delbrück on multiple levels, including politically. These included Lehmann and Max Lenz (1850–1932), whom Delbrück met in Greifswald, as well as Friedrich Meinecke (1862–1954). Meinecke and Harnack would become Delbrück's closest associates for many years to come.[102]

The year 1900 was a pivotal moment for Delbrück, as the first volume of his fully academic history of the art of war, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, was published.[103] The book covers the ancient era (*Das Altertum*), from the First Persian War (490 BCE) to the fall of the Roman Republic (30 BCE). Delbrück was primarily interested in Greek and Roman history. Other peoples are mentioned only in the context of conflicts with the Greeks and Romans. Of particular interest is the deeply personal preface, in which the Berlin professor briefly outlines his life path and the motivations behind his work on the book.[104] The preface exudes satisfaction from overcoming numerous obstacles but also expresses bitterness caused by the widespread lack of faith in the project. Delbrück could at least count on his brother-in-law's support, as evidenced by the dedication to Harnack.

Delbrück's book was a real breakthrough and is still widely discussed in academic circles. His vision of Greco-Roman warfare differed so greatly from previous ones that it immediately became a reference point for further discussions, regardless of any author's stance on its components. Delbrück discovered the potential of a purely academic approach to military history. From then on, his research perspective was a genuine alternative to the "general staff perspective," proving the latter to be anachronistic.[105] After the book was published, attempts

102 Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, *cit*., pp. 153, 185; Id., *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin*, *cit*., pp. 155–156; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 45.

103 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*.

104 *Ibid*., pp. LI–LVI.

105 Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 41, 43; Michael Salewski, «Zur preußischen Militärgeschichtsschreibung im 19. Jahrhundert,» in Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt (ed.), *Militärgeschichte in Deutschland und Österreich von 18. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, Mittler, Bonn 1985, p. 65; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück:

to describe antiquity with unsuitable terminology or to study military affairs in isolation from their social context ceased.

The first volume was the most successful compared to the others due to its significance, and it is considered the most popular part of the tetralogy today. Although Delbrück repeated some previously published findings, he was influenced by the controversies they sparked and made the unusual decision to add excursions in which he addressed specific issues step by step. Despite swearing in the introduction that the work is purely academic and was not intended as a basis for current military concepts,[106] it paradoxically had an extremely significant influence on the German military.

Fascinated by the description of the Battle of Cannae (216 BCE), between 1905 and 1906, Schlieffen developed a plan to encircle the French forces. His plan would go down in history simply as the "Schlieffen Plan."[107] However, excessive attachment to the "general staff perspective" or a misinterpretation of the author's intentions caused Schlieffen to apply a maneuver used at the tactical level to the strategic level. It could have theoretically succeeded, but it had nothing to do with Delbrück's understanding of history. The double envelopment maneuver used by the Carthaginians succeeded not on its own but because they broke the Romans' will to resist, which Schlieffen simply overlooked. Therefore, the emotional reaction of the soldiers was crucial to achieving final victory.

In 1901 two more volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* were published with the following subtitles: *Die Germanen*[108] and *Das Mittelalter*.[109] The first volume covered the evolution of the Roman military during the imperial period (30 BCE–476 CE) and its interactions with the Germanic peoples. The second volume began with Charlemagne's reign (742/747–814) and ended with

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The Military Historian,» *cit*., p. 326; Dennis E. Showalter, «Of Decisive Battles and Intellectual Fashions: Sir Edward Creasy Revisited,» *MA*, 52, 4, 1988, p. 206; Antonio Espino López, «La renovación de la historia de las batallas,» *Revista de historia militar*, 91, 2001, p. 160; Stephen Morillo, Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, Polity Press, Cambridge–Malden 2006, pp. 34–35; Karl Christ, «Einleitung zum Nachdruck,» *cit*., pp. 693–694.

106 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LI–LII.

107 Alfred von Schlieffen, *Cannae*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1925, p. 3; Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. IX].

108 *Ibid*., 2, *Die Germanen*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017.

109 *Ibid.*, 3, *Das Mittelalter*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017.

the Burgundian Wars (1474–1477). Delbrück considered the second volume to be the most successful because he could construct a multifaceted narrative.[110] In both cases, Delbrück was interested in closely integrating social and military structures. Such a perspective allowed him—unlike "historians in military uniforms"—to highlight the origins of military institutions and tactics without assuming their purely rational implementation. Instead, he drew attention to their sociocultural foundation. As with the first volume, Delbrück's intention to emphasize the role of the "people under arms" (*Volk in Waffen*) is evident. He considered general conscription to be one of the highest forms of political empowerment.[111] His view clearly references the Prussian Reform Movement of 1807 and the military transformations carried out under the influence of Revolutionary France (1789–1799/1802).[112]

The defining sections of both volumes are the analyses of the socioeconomic ties and forms of dependence among the Germanic peoples, as well as their influence on military organization.[113] The volumes also describe the impact of the feudal system and military culture on how Western European knights understood their military obligations and conducted warfare.[114] While some of Delbrück's interpretations of specific details have become outdated, his descriptive method remains exemplary. Until now, the reconstruction of battle courses was dominated by a chess-like approach. For Delbrück, many battles were clashes of different military cultures, not merely tactical concepts. He used analogies to highlight the durability and relative repeatability of phenomena from long ago. His research perspective in the field of military history made him a precursor to the *longue durée* concept associated with postwar research conducted by the "*Annales* School."[115]

Interest in the volume dedicated to the Germans was so great that a second edition was published as early as 1902. It became impossible to claim that military

110 *Ibid*., 4, [p. IX].

111 Id., *Regierung und Volkswille*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1914, pp. 98–103.

112 See Chapter 3.

113 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 2, *cit*., pp. 3–54.

114 *Ibid*., 3, pp. 261–362.

115 Arden Bucholz, «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *The Historian*, 55, 3, 1993, p. 525; Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare del mondo antico. Prospettive retrospettive*, Jovene, Napoli 2006, p. 215.

history was not of interest to history enthusiasts but rather an eccentric choice of an equally eccentric professor. Even historians who were not sympathetic to him found it difficult to question Delbrück's method of historical description. His method allowed for a break from the belief about military experience as a crucial factor to understanding the past centuries' warfare. Though it was difficult and laborious, it perfectly fit the current understanding of the essence of universal history, free from the limitations of a narrow field of specialization.

Over the next few years, Delbrück turned his attention to political activity and polemics, significantly hindering progress on the fourth volume. His activity resumed in 1907. The revised and expanded third volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* appeared then, followed by the first volume the next year. In 1908, Delbrück celebrated his sixtieth birthday. To commemorate the occasion, his students and colleagues published a special volume (*Festschrift*) containing papers dedicated to him in the fields of history, philosophy, theology, and linguistics.[116] Notably, despite the enormous significance of the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, only one classicist participated in creating the *Festschrift*. Apparently ancient historians were not yet familiar with Delbrück's research methods.

The lavish celebrations of the 1900th anniversary of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (9 CE) inspired the Berlin professor to revisit ancient issues. During the festivities, he delivered a lecture at the monument to the Cheruscan chief Arminius (?–c. 21 CE), also known as "Hermann" in nationalist propaganda, located near Detmold.[117] He then published articles on the importance of ancient cavalry[118] and new findings about the Battle of Cannae.[119] Even when he received an invitation in 1913 to deliver a series of lectures at the University of London, much of his discussion on the usefulness of statistical methods in historical research referred to ancient Greece and Rome.[120]

116 Freunden und Schülern (ed.), *Delbrück-Festschrift. Gesammelte Aufsätze, Professor Hans Delbrück zu seinem sechzigsten Geburtstage (11 November 1908)*, Stilke, Berlin 1908.

117 Hans Delbrück, *Die Schlacht im Teutoburger Walde; rede, gehalten bei der 1900-jahrfeier am Hermannsdenkmal auf der Grotenburg bei Detmold am 15 August 1909*, Heynke, Detmold 1909.

118 Id., «Antike Kavallerie,» *Klio*, 10, 1910, pp. 335–340.

119 Id., «Die Schlacht bei Cannä,» *HZ*, 109 (3), 1912, pp. 481–507.

120 Id., *Numbers in History*, University of London Press, London 1913. On Delbrück's visit to

In 1911, Delbrück was one of the founders of the Emperor Wilhelm Society for the Advancement of Scholarship (Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften). Harnack was elected president, and Delbrück became a member of the supporting council alongside Lenz and Lehmann, among others. In the same year, the Society's members decided to establish the German Institute for Historical Studies (Deutsches Institut für Geschichtswissenschaft) within the Society. The Institute aimed to support the historical research of young scholars by awarding them purpose-funded scholarships.[121]

By 1914, Delbrück had educated four students who earned doctorates and dedicated their lives to higher education: Emil Daniels (1863–1934),[122] Paul Rohrbach (1869–1956),[123] Gustav Roloff (1866–1952),[124] and Martin Hobohm (1883–1942).[125] Although Rohrbach's formal advisor was Harnack and Hobohm's was Lehmann, both acknowledged strong connections to Delbrück's research approach and personality.[126] After earning his doctorate, Hobohm moved to Berlin to work on his habilitation thesis in close collaboration with Delbrück. The University of Berlin awarded him the degree in 1913.[127] All of

London: Charles à Court Repington, *After the War; London–Paris–Rome–Athens–Prague–Vienna–Budapest–Bucharest–Berlin–Sofia–Coblenz–New York–Washington: A Diary*, Constable & Company Ltd., London 1922, p. 261.

121 Hermann Heimpel, «Über Organisationsformen historischer Forschung in Deutschland,» *HZ*, 189, 1959, p. 135; Eckart Henning, «Die Historischen Hilfswissenschaften in Berlin,» in Reimer Hansen, Wolfgang Ribbe (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Berlin im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Persönlichkeiten und Institutionen*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1992, p. 385.

122 The title of the doctoral dissertation defended in 1886: *Zur Schlacht von Torgau am 3. November 1760. Eine Säkularerinnerung an Hans Joachim von Zieten*. Daniels was considered a promising researcher, but his Jewish origin often led to reluctance within the German academic environment of the time, which was heavily influenced by chauvinistic nationalism. This significantly slowed down his academic career: Jonas Klein, «Hans Delbrücks ‚unbekannte' Schüler,» *cit*., p. 120.

123 The title of the doctoral dissertation defended in 1891: *Die alexandrinischen Patriarchen als Großmacht in der kirchenpolitischen Entwicklung des Orients*.

124 The title of the doctoral dissertation defended in 1891: *Politik und Kriegführung 1814*.

125 The title of the doctoral dissertation defended in 1910: *Machiavellis Florentinische Miliz*.

126 Martin Hobohm, *Hans Delbrück der Siebzigjährige*, *cit*., p. 1; Paul Rohrbach, «Delbrück als Prophet,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, p. 56.

127 Kaspar Elm, «Mittelalterforschung in Berlin. Dauer und Wandel,» in Reimer Hansen, Wolfgang Ribbe (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Berlin im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Persönlich-*

them maintained contact with Delbrück until his death and even prepared a second *Festschrift* for publication in 1928.[128]

Delbrück educated and collaborated with the following younger historians at various stages: Heinrich Friedjung (1851–1920), Ludwig Riess (1861–1928), Charles Saroléa (1870–1953), Colonel Arthur L. Conger (1872–1951), Peter Rassow (1889–1961), Otto Haintz (1890–1969), Hans Rothfels (1891–1976), Konrad Molinski (1892–?), and Walter Elze (1891–1979). He consistently exchanged ideas with Lenz and Lehmann, despite their rather loose connection to military history. If one were to point to a scholar whose understanding of history most closely resembled Delbrück's, it would undoubtedly be Hobohm. At the other extreme would be Elze, not only because of his political sympathies, which were unfamiliar to Delbrück and influenced his historical writings after 1932, but also because of his clear attachment to the "general staff perspective." Ironically, Elze was appointed director of the newly created War History Department (Kriegsgeschichtlichen Abteilung) at the University of Berlin within the historical seminar in 1933.[129] Delbrück was never granted such an honor.

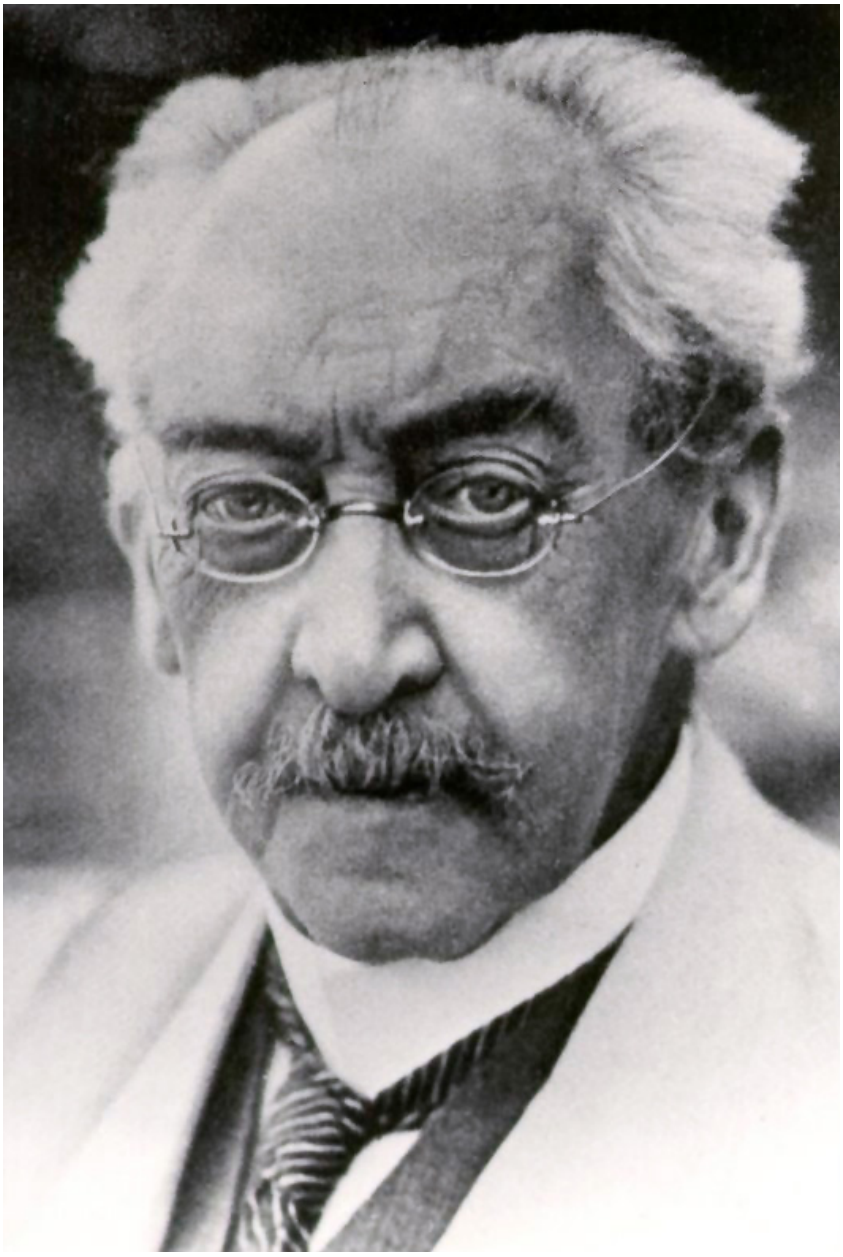
1.4. Involvement in public affairs in the years 1881–1914

Shortly after moving to Berlin in 1873, Delbrück began hosting discussion meetings on Wednesday evenings. These meetings became known as the "Wednesday Society" (*Mittwochsgesellschaft*). Due to space limitations, each session had approximately 20 participants. Notable attendees from the world of

keiten und Institutionen, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1992, pp. 229, 234; Wilhelm Deist, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 382; Wolfgang Hardtwig, «Neuzeithistorie in Berlin,» *cit.*, p. 314; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., p. 45; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 42; Id., «Hans Delbrücks ‚unbekannte' Schüler,» *cit*., p. 122. Dissertation title: *Machiavellis Renaissance der Kriegskunst*.

128 Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928. No Hobohm was among the authors participating in this endeavor, though he collaborated with Delbrück in a different field, which will be discussed later in the chapter. From 1923 to 1933, Hobohm worked as a private lecturer at the University of Berlin, attempting to popularize Delbrück's work.

129 Kaspar Elm, «Mittelalterforschung in Berlin,» *cit*., pp. 238–239; Wolfgang Vitzthum, «Preusse im George-Kreis: Walter Elze,» in Volker Caspari (ed.), *Theorie und Geschichte der Wirtschaft. Festschrift für Bertram Schefold*, Metropolis, Marburg 2009, p. 351.



Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930).
(Alchetron, Creative Commons, https://alchetron.com/Adolf-von-Harnack#adolf-von-harnack-3cf1ee5f-5976-422c-a4c2-2507c38134a-resize-750.jpg)

academia included Harnack, Lenz, Meinecke, Gustav Schmoller (1838–1917), Lujo Brentano (1844–1931), Wilhelm Kahl (1848–1932), and Max Sering (1857–1939), among others. Politicians were also present: Althoff, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg (1856–1921), Max von Baden (1867–1929), and Bogdan von Hutten-Czapski (1851–1937). Financiers were present as well: Paul von Schwabach (1867–1938) and Karl Helfferich (1872–1924). Delbrück also invited his students and male family members. He usually announced the topic of conversation in advance. Occasionally, meetings were held in his absence. In such cases, he required the designated person to report to him on the course of the discussion. In 1914, the meetings became more formalized and were jointly managed by Delbrück and Eugen Schiffer (1860–1954), the head of the legal department of the War Ministry. The subject matter was strictly concerned with current events, i.e., international politics and military affairs.[130] Years later, younger participants of the "Wednesday Society" recalled Delbrück's erudition and broad horizons.[131]

Additional meetings took place during various private celebrations and quickly turned into lively discussions. Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) participated in one of the most memorable events. On November 11, 1918, a reception was held for Delbrück's seventieth birthday. That evening, news of Germany's surrender reached Berlin. The atmosphere became somber, and with tears in his eyes, Delbrück foresaw the end of the old world and the uncertainty of the new order.[132] The traditional gift in such circumstances—a marble bust—became a

130 Paul Rühlmann, «Delbrücks „Mittwochabend",» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 75–81; Bruno Baier, Emil Daniels, Eugen Schiffer, «Drei Reden. Zum Gedächtnis an Hans Delbrück gehalten in der außerordentlichen Sitzung der Mittwochsgesellschaft,» *PJ*, 218, 1929, pp. 290–303; Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 109; Friedrich Meinecke, *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin*, *cit*., pp. 166–171; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 74–75; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., pp. 393, 552; Charles E. McClelland, «Öffentlicher Raum und politische Kultur,» *cit*., p. 601; Jonas Klein, Andreas Rose, «Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik,» *cit*., pp. 42, 45–46; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 412.

131 Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit.*, p. 144; Axel von Harnack, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 419.

132 Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Fehlgeburt einer Republik. Spektator in Berlin 1918 bis 1922*, ed. Johann H. Claussen, Campus, Frankfurt am Main 1994, pp. 9–10. Reconstruction of the list of main guests at the meeting: Christian Lüdtke, «Hans Delbrück als „Kassandra". Die Feier

lifelong reminder of the day of national disaster for Delbrück.[133]

Delbrück's contemporaries always considered politics as his second passion, after history.[134] He explained that he never wanted to become a professional politician and that his involvement in public affairs was intended to deepen his understanding of his field of study.[135] However, given the extent of his non-academic activities, as well as considering the atmosphere of his family home, his connections with the imperial court, and the culture of the Prussian intellectual elite, it is difficult to fully accept Delbrück's explanation. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that Delbrück was first and foremost a historian and that academic life was the most important to him.[136]

As he entered adulthood, the "father of military history" held democratic views, just like his father, Berthold. He changed under the influence of participating in the Franco-Prussian War. In a letter to a friend dated September 11, 1870, he wrote about the disappearance of his democratic views.[137] In a letter dated May 3, 1871, he reflected on the negative impact of war on idealism.[138] In the nineteenth century, the Prussian Army was closely tied to the monarchy. Perhaps the atmosphere of emotional closeness in the face of danger caused Delbrück's worldview to evolve. His evolution did not contradict the principles instilled in him during his youth, including a love of freedom, a pro-state stance, humanism, and a sense of national belonging.[139]

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seines 70. Geburtstages am 11. November 1918 als Brennpunkt der liberalen Sinnsuche im deutschen Zusammenbruch,» in Sebastian Elsbach, Marcel Böhles, Andreas Braune (ed.), *Demokratische Persönlichkeiten in der Weimarer Republik*, Steiner, Stuttgart 2020, pp. 316–317. Initially, Troeltsch was part of Meinecke's circle of friends, and it was likely he who introduced Troeltsch to Delbrück's circle: Friedrich Meinecke, *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin*, *cit*., p. 49.

133 Christian Lüdtke, «Hans Delbrück als „Kassandra",» *cit*., p. 316.

134 Martin Hobohm, *Hans Delbrück der Siebzigjährige*, *cit*., p. 16; Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 7; Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, *cit*., pp. 184–185.

135 Hans Delbrück, «Danksagung,» *cit*., p. 443; Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 10.

136 Hans Delbrück, *Regierung und Volkswille*, *cit*., pp. III–IV; Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 10.

137 Publication of the letter: Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., p. 8 n. 4.

138 Publication of the letter: *ibid*., p. 8 n. 5.

139 Hans Delbrück, «Danksagung,» *cit*., p. 442.

From 1874 to 1879, Delbrück's presence at court solidified his commitment to the monarchy. However, during a conversation with Crown Princess Victoria (1840–1901; the German empress from 1888), he described himself as a "conservative social democrat" in a somewhat provocative manner.[140] As late as 1882, he and a group of politically engaged friends referred to themselves as "academic social democrats."[141] Delbrück was not fascinated with Marxism. Rather, he was convinced of the urgent need for social reforms, which many conservatives viewed as a threat to constitutional stability. Delbrück disliked both conservatives and proponents of populist ideologies, including chauvinistic nationalists and socialists.[142] He found the latter easier to tolerate because, like social democrats, he believed in applying effective pressure to rulers by adopting a legalistic stance. Delbrück's social sensitivity led Ferdinand von Stumm-Halberg (1836–1901) to call him an "incorrigible social democrat."[143] In fact, Delbrück considered Marxism an unacceptable intellectual construct because it was based on the assumption of historical determinism and disregarded the causal role of individuals and factors other than economics.[144] He called Karl Marx (1818–1883) a "dangerous charlatan."[145] As early as 1882, Delbrück considered himself a conservative liberal. By this, he meant supporting the existing form of government while simultaneously recognizing individual freedom as a

140 Id., «Das Programm der Preußischen Jahrbücher,» *cit*., p. 479.

141 Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit.*, pp. 10–11; Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., p. 10.

142 *Ibid*., pp. 11, 44–77; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 131–147; Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 163–164, 182–183; Charles E. McClelland, «Berlin Historians and German Politics,» *cit.*, pp. 23–25; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 118–119. Delbruck most fully expressed his view on people's political participation in governance in: Hans Delbrück, *Regierung und Volkswille*, *cit*. His press battles with socialist Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) and nationalist Maximilian Harden (1861–1927), which continued even after the end of World War I, were widely echoed.

143 Id., «Politische Korrespondenz,» *PJ*, 83, 1896, p. 594.

144 Id., *Die Marx'sche Geschichtsphilosophie*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1921. More broadly on Delbrück's relationship with the Social Democrats: Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 118–142.

145 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte. Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Berlin 1896–1920*, 1, *Das Altertum (bis 300 n. Chr.)*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1924, p. 10. See also Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 133–135.

supreme value.[146] He showed great social sensitivity throughout his life.[147] He also believed in the leading role of intellectual elites in political life, who set the tone without losing sight of the needs of society as a whole, thanks to their education and cultural refinement.[148]

In 1882, Delbrück decided to run for the Prussian parliament (Preußische Landtag) as a Free Conservative Party (Freikonservative Partei) candidate.[149] He won the seat and held it from 1882 to 1885. In 1884, he won another election, this time for a seat in the German Reichstag, where he served until 1890. He chose not to run in the next election. During his time there, he was mainly an observer and never gave a speech. He preferred to remain behind the scenes, feeling most comfortable in political journalism.[150]

In 1882, he founded the journal *Politische Wochenschrift* with Stephan Gans zu Putlitz (1854–1883), a private lecturer in economics whom he met at the University of Berlin. After becoming co-editor and then editor of *Preußische Jahrbücher*, he abandoned the earlier project.[151] He fought his biggest political battles through *Preußische Jahrbücher*, mainly by criticizing Pan-German chauvinists.

146 Hans Delbrück, «Politische Correspondenz,» *PJ*, 76, 1894, pp. 174–175; Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 24. More broadly on Delbrück's perception of conservatism and liberalism: Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 29–41; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 96–107.

147 Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., pp. 10–11, 21–22.

148 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 15, 29, 151.

149 On the political program and political background of the Free Conservative Party: Volker Stalmann, *Die Partei Bismarcks. Die Deutsche Reichs- und Freikonservative Partei 1866 bis 1890*, Droste, Düsseldorf 2000; Matthias Alexander, *Die Freikonservative Partei 1890–1918. Gemäßigter Konservatismus in der konstitutionellen Monarchie*, Droste, Düsseldorf 2000. The Free Conservative Party emphasized the central role of Protestantism in public life, unconditionally supporting Bismarck and believing in the necessity of concentrating power in the hands of the chancellor. Delbrück did not share similar views, yet he was tolerated by the party's members. His popularity among voters and passive behavior during meetings also served as a safeguard against his explosive temper, which could have led to political complications. Cf. Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 23–24, 31–37.

150 Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., pp. 111–112; Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 577–578; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 42–43.

151 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 8–9; Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., p. 162; Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion. Hans Delbrück und der Krieg in der Geschichte,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. XV; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 48.

Delbrück's greatest political enemy was the Pan-German League (Alldeutsche Verband),[152] with which many academics sympathized, including the world-renowned ancient historian Eduard Meyer (1855–1930).[153] Delbrück initially followed the League's actions with interest, but the Pan-Germans' shift toward a chauvinistic form of nationalism based on annexationism, xenophobia, and racial theories disillusioned him completely.[154] Delbrück advocated for the concept of a "political nation," which he defined as a society based on a shared culture and the will to create a common state.[155] He was disgusted by displays of racism and antisemitism and rejected Prussian militarism. He was openly opposed to basing politics on the emotions generated by nationalism.[156] In a scathing 1913 article, he summarized his disdain for the Pan-Germans.[157]

Another organization with which Delbrück was in constant conflict was the German Eastern Marches Association (Deutscher Ostmarkenverein), more commonly known as the Hakata. In 1902, its members sued him for defamation. The case ended two years later with a verdict in Delbrück's favor.[158] Commenting on the court's decision, Delbrück announced further articles against the Hakata,

152 Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 108; Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 24–25; Id., «Delbrück, Hans,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 3, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1957, p. 578; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 147–154; Id., *Z dziejów niemieckiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX wieku. Eseje filozoficzno-historyczne*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 1965, pp. 82, 186; Klaus Schwabe, «Ursprung und Verbreitung des alldeutschen Annexionismus in der deutschen Professorenschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg,» *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 14, 2, 1966, p. 105; Id., «Ursprung und Verbreitung,» *cit*., pp. 71, 175; Michael Grüttner, «Nachkriegszeit,» in Heinz-Elmar Tenorth (ed.), *Geschichte der Universität Unter den Linden*, 2, *Die Berlin Universität zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1945*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2012, p. 27; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 210.

153 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 324–332; Bernd Sösemann, «"Der Kühnste Entschluss führt am sichersten zum Ziel". Eduard Meyer und die Politik,» in William M. Calder III, Alexander Demandt (ed.), *Eduard Meyer. Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers*, Brill, Leiden 1990, pp. 467–469, 477–482; Burkhard Meissner, «Meyer, Eduard,» in Peter Kuhlmann, Helmuth Schneider (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly*, Suppl. 6, *History of Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2014, p. 412; Stefan Rebenich, *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., pp. 161–162.

154 Hans Delbrück, «Das Programm der Preußischen Jahrbücher,» *cit*., p. 487.

155 Id., *Regierung und Volkswille*, *cit*., pp. 2–4.

156 Emil Daniels, Konrad Lehmann, Gustav Roloff, «Vorwort,» *cit*., p. 12.

157 Hans Delbrück, «Die Alldeutschen,» *PJ*, 154, 1913, pp. 397–403, 573–577.

158 Id., «Politische Korrespondenz,» *PJ*, 118, 1904, p. 350.

as he had no intention of giving up on condemning manifestations of national chauvinism.[159]

The main point of contention with both organizations, besides their preferred style of politics, was their attitude toward national minorities, primarily Poles and Danes.[160] Delbrück opposed Germanization, deeming it beneath the German nation with such significant cultural achievements. In 1909, he co-founded the Association for German Peace Work in the North March (Verein für deutsche Friedensarbeit in der Nordmark), which opposed the administrative oppression of the Danish population and the settlement campaign in Schleswig-Holstein.[161] Delbrück was also involved in the Polish cause. After 1889, Treitschke ironically referred to *Preußische Jahrbücher*, which was edited by Delbrück, as *Polnische Jahrbücher*.[162]

In 1894, Delbrück published a brochure titled *Die Polenfrage*, in which he condemned the negative consequences of Germanization, the perpetuation of national prejudices, and the notion that the Polish lands belonged eternally to the Reich. To Delbrück, Polish culture, rooted in Catholicism, was incompatible with the Protestant values on which a united Germany was founded. Therefore, he tried to convince German politicians to establish an independent Polish state linked to the Reich politically. However, if German decision-makers wanted to

159 *Ibid*., pp. 350–351. See also: Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 149–155.

160 See Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., pp. 26–27; Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 108; Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit.*, p. 143; Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 77–100; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 186–224; Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 166–167; Kazimierz Wajda, «Ewolucja obrazu Polski i Polaków na łamach *Preußische Jahrbücher* (do 1914 roku),» *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Bibliologia*, 4, 430, 2000, pp. 285–292; Robert Spät, *Die „polnische Frage" in der öffentlichen Diskussion im Deutschen Reich, 1894–1918*, Herder-Institut, Marburg 2014, pp. 46–51, 55–56, 97, 125–128, 138–260; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 143–180 (Poles), 180–205 (Danes). Delbrück used to say that even if his actions in defense of the Poles and Danes were unsuccessful, there must be someone among Germans who would bear witness to the vitality of noble attitudes: Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 27.

161 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., p. 99; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 192–193.

162 Franz Mehring, «Der Fall Delbrück,» in Id., *Politische Publizistik*, 1, *1891 bis 1904*, ed. Thomas Höhle, Hans Koch, Josef Schleifstein, Gesammelte Schriften, 14, Dietz, Berlin 1964, p. 274.

maintain influence over their new neighbor, Delbrück believed they should do so through economic cooperation and cultural exchange rather than unreserved political interference.[163] Delbrück first publicly expressed his idea in 1891[164] and summarized it in a 1914 publication.[165]

According to Delbrück, aspiring independent Poles would initially seek a political ally to help them achieve their goal. He considered Russia to be Germany's main opponent, so in his opinion, the German *raison d'état* was to prevent Russia from taking Poland under its patronage. Germanization turned the Reich into a position of an oppressive state toward Poles; therefore, they would leave it and turn to Slavic Russia at the first opportunity. In 1914, Delbrück complained about Germany's poor reputation in the Western world due to its misguided and chauvinistic policies toward smaller nations.[166] During World War I, he lobbied for the creation of an independent Poland composed of lands from the Russian, Austrian, and German partitions.[167] Initially, in 1915, he promoted the idea of recreating the Kingdom of Poland within its 1791 borders and linking it to Saxony through a personal union.[168]

Delbrück's political involvement in defending national minorities did not go unpunished. His 1899 speech, in which he publicly condemned the government's Germanization policy, had the most serious consequences. His public appearances caught the attention of Wilhelm II. At the emperor's behest, Prussian Minister of Culture Robert Bosse (1832–1901) initiated disciplinary

163 Hans Delbrück, *Die Polenfrage*, Walther, Berlin 1894. On Delbrück's critical attitude toward Catholicism: Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 37–41; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 113–117; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 93–118. However, his aversion to Catholicism had nothing to do with an aversion to Poles, as evidenced by the nature of his journalistic engagement.

164 Hans Delbrück, «Politische Correspondenz,» *PJ*, 68, 1891, pp. 905–906.

165 Id., *Regierung und Volkswille*, *cit*., pp. 115–127.

166 Id., *Krieg und Politik*, 1, *cit*., pp. 3–4.

167 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 129–131; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 176–179, 205–215; Klaus Schwabe, «Ursprung und Verbreitung,» *cit.*, pp. 117–122; Id., *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., pp. 56, 75–76, 79–81; Robert Spät, *Die „polnische Frage"*, *cit*., pp. 262–265, 288, 290.

168 Hans Delbrück, «Die Rede des Reichskanzlers und die Zukunft Polens,» *PJ*, 161, 1915, pp. 556–561; Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., p. 76; Piotr Mikietyński, *Niemiecka droga ku Mitteleuropie. Polityka II Rzeszy wobec Królestwa Polskiego (1914–1916)*, Historia Iagellonica, Kraków 2009, p. 85.

proceedings against Delbrück. The proceedings ended with a reprimand and a lifetime ban from lecturing. Despite his negative attitude toward Polish culture, Mommsen also condemned Germanization and intervened with the emperor on Delbrück's behalf. His intervention was successful, and Delbrück returned to the university in the mid-1900s. To avoid a political scandal, he was forced to publicly support German naval armament policy.[169]

Although Wilhelm II's intervention might have dampened Delbrück's enthusiasm, in 1901 the "father of military history" and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff prepared a petition in defense of Polish parents, students, and teachers striking in Września (Wreschen in German) near Poznań (Posen in German). The petition demanded the freedom to teach Polish and Catholicism. After collecting signatures, Mommsen and Harnack submitted it to the Ministry of Education.[170]

Delbrück believed in the paramount importance of personal freedom, including freedom of opinion as long as it did not take on an anti-state character. He actively opposed attempts to expel social democrats from public life. In 1898, he demonstrated solidarity with the physicist Leo Arons (1860–1919), alongside others including Harnack, Mommsen, and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

The central point of contention was the attempt to force the university to expel scholars who sympathized with socialism. Arons was the first victim of the Prussian government's pressure campaign. In 1894, the University of Berlin's disciplinary committee refused to take action against him, exploiting a loophole in the regulations exempting private lecturers from disciplinary rules. Nevertheless, the following year, Arons was asked to stop his non-scientific activities because the Minister of Culture could force changes to the university's statutes. In 1898, the so-called *Lex Arons* was passed, bringing private lecturers under the existing disciplinary regulations. Once again, the University of Berlin's disciplinary committee did not yield to pressure. Although the committee had to proceed with the case, it unanimously dismissed the charges against Arons. Delbrück was

169 Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit.*, p. 143; Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 165–166; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» *cit*., p. 201; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., pp. 399–400; Charles E. McClelland, «Öffentlicher Raum und politische Kultur,» *cit.*, p. 572; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 183, 188–190.

170 Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., pp. 445, 536; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 168–171.

one of its members, and Mommsen served as chairman. In their decision, the commission members recognized freedom of conscience as one of the pillars of university activity. They also stated that lecturers' political views should not be a criterion for evaluating the quality of their research and teaching.[171]

As a political journalist, Delbrück had the opportunity to take revenge on Bismarck for how he treated Friedrich III. Delbrück personally observed the strained relationship between the "Iron Chancellor" and the Crown Prince.[172] He also heard Bismarck's 1888 parliamentary speech, in which Bismarck openly criticized the recently deceased ruler's political vision.[173] Although Delbrück's position was too weak to oppose Bismarck directly, he did not hesitate to attack Gustav Freytag (1816–1895), the author of a pamphlet aimed at Friedrich III.[174] Delbrück also tried to shape the image of the chancellor and his legacy.[175]

Delbrück was not so blinded by personal resentment as to overlook some of the "Iron Chancellor's" achievements. He realized that Germany's reunification and transformation into a European power most likely would not have occurred without Bismarck's leadership. In 1915, Delbrück published an extensive analysis juxtaposing the positive effects of Bismarck's rule with his destructive influence on political culture, his disregard for the Reich Constitution, and his flawed nationality policy.[176] In 1926, Delbrück published an article focusing on the myth of the "Iron Chancellor." A new generation of politicians presented Bismarck as an infallible, providential man.[177] In his paper, Delbrück defended Wilhelm II's decision to dismiss the head of government, accusing Bismarck of seeking to usurp full power.[178] Delbrück softened his previously expressed opinion about preparing a *coup d'état* and planning to establish a dictatorship by

171 Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., pp. 471–472; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 190.

172 Hans Delbrück, «Persönliche Erinnerungen,» *cit*., p. 105.

173 Frank L. Müller, *Our Fritz: Emperor Frederick III and the Political Culture of Imperial Germany*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA–London 2011, p. 249.

174 Hans Delbrück, «Gustav Freytag über Kaiser Friedrich,» *PJ*, 64, 1889, pp. 587–595.

175 See Id., *Krieg und Politik*, 3, *cit*., p. 226.

176 Id., *Bismarcks Erbe*, Ullstein, Berlin–Wien 1915.

177 Id., «Von der Bismarck-Legende,» *HZ*, 133, 1, pp. 69–82.

178 *Ibid*., p. 82.

Bismarck.[179] Thus, while Delbrück acknowledged Bismarck's effectiveness, he portrayed him as a politician with a pathological hunger for absolute power. In his view, the "Iron Chancellor" was incapable of establishing a stable political system.

Although Delbrück sympathized with the British liberal environment, he saw their homeland as Germany's primary competitor in the pursuit of global power. He supported the government's efforts to acquire more colonies, even if he feared Britain would trigger a preemptive war. To avoid provoking international tensions, he advocated for achieving a balance of power through gradual development. An important part of the process of strengthening Germany was expanding the war fleet. Delbrück opposed the German naval development plans until 1907, when he changed his position. He realized that Great Britain would not treat Germany as an equal partner until Germany secured its sea routes and participated more fully in international trade.[180] Delbrück consistently viewed the British as the guarantors of world order. Shortly before World War I broke out, he published an English pamphlet arguing against the inevitability of armed confrontation.[181]

Delbrück opposed the idea of universal disarmament, a concept advocated by Jan G. Bloch (1836–1902). Delbrück was likely unaware of Bloch's close ties to General Alexei Kuropatkin (1848–1925) and Sergei Witte (1849–1915). These ties stemmed from a plan to impede the technological advancement of the Austro-Hungarian and French armies. Delbrück also did not know about the preparation of the first three volumes of Bloch's most famous work (*Przyszła wojna pod względem technicznym, ekonomicznym i politycznym*) by officers of the Russian General Staff, nor about its translation for the First Hague Confer-

179 Id., *Bismarcks Erbe*, *cit*., pp. 123–125.

180 Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker*, *cit*., pp. 101–116; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 41, 155–176; Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., pp. 54–55, 59–60, 109–111; Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., p. 164; Charles E. McClelland, «Berlin Historians and German Politics,» *cit*., p. 73; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., pp. 499, 504–505; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 49–52; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 274–277, 287–312.

181 Hans Delbrück, *How to improve Anglo-German relations*, Dutton & Company, New York 1912.

Friedrich Meinecke (1862–1954).
(Alchetron, Creative Commons, https://alchetron.com/Friedrich-Meinecke#friedrich-meinecke-f20bd826-d5dd-4c2f-a94b-71796aaa39a-resize-750.jpeg)

ence (1899) from the funds of the Russian Ministry of Finance.[182]

Delbrück engaged in a substantive debate with Bloch, accusing him of amateurism in military matters. According to Delbrück, disarmament would be suicidal for European powers because the purpose of the technological arms race is to deter opponents by creating the prospect of mutually unprofitable losses, not to provoke war.[183] While the experiences of World Wars I and II seem to contradict Delbrück's reasoning, the invention of the atomic bomb confirmed his predictions. The problem was the path the country had to take to achieve its strategic security, given the unknown time required for research and industrial production.

Delbrück's diverse forms of political engagement culminated in his editorship of two publications intended for a general audience.

The first was *Europäischer Geschichtskalender*, published since 1860, which contains a list of the most important annual European events. Delbrück's name first appeared on the title page of issue 27 in 1887, and he was last included in issue 34 in 1894. His student, Roloff, became the next editor, most likely proposed for the position by Delbrück himself.

Das Staatsarchiv. Sammlung der offiziellen Aktenstücke zur Außenpolitik der Gegenwart, founded in 1861, was more specialized. It was a selection of documents published annually by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For obvious reasons, it only contained publicly available documents, which could distort one's understanding of the contemporary events. Nevertheless, it is currently a valuable source of information for researchers of diplomacy and state propaganda. No fabricated or censored materials were published in *Das Sta-*

182 The analysis of sources clearly shows that Witte initiated Bloch's pacifist project from the very beginning and provided him with intelligence data on the positions of the German and Swiss delegations. Immediately after the conference concluded, its participants warned their governments about Bloch's espionage connections. In 1911, the Russian General Staff openly admitted to authoring Bloch's book. A brilliant analysis of this issue was presented by: Virgilio Ilari, «*Buduščaja vojna*. Jan Bloch, lo stato maggiore russo e la Prima Conferenza di Pace dell'Aia,» in Id. (ed.), Future Wars. *Storia della distopia militare*, Società italiana di Storia Militare. Acies edizioni Milano, Milano 2016, pp. 273–297. This issue remains practically unknown, which proves the effectiveness of the official version disseminated with the involvement of the Russian authorities.

183 Hans Delbrück, «Der Zukunftskrieg und die Zukunftsfriede,» *PJ*, 96, 1899, pp. 203–229.

atsarchiv. Delbrück worked as an editor from 1881 to 1894. Similar to the case of *Europäischer Geschichtskalender*, he resigned after receiving an associate professorship. This time, Roloff also replaced him.

1.5. The Great War and its aftermath (1914–1929)

The outbreak of World War I significantly delayed work on the fourth and final volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, redirecting Delbrück's attention to current events. He viewed the Great War as a disaster for Europe and a triumph of irresponsible policy based on nationalist populism. As late as the early summer of 1914, he met with Wilhelm II while hunting and tried to persuade him to prevent the war.[184] When his efforts failed, Delbrück believed that, once war had been declared, every citizen should remain loyal to their homeland and support the cause of victory to the best of their ability. However, his political position did not mean absolute acceptance of the actions of decision-makers. Delbrück did not spare them in the analyses he regularly published in *Preußische Jahrbücher*. After the war, his analyses were collected in three volumes titled *Krieg und Politik*.[185]

Thanks to them, Delbrück established his reputation as a leading expert on military affairs, arousing even greater hatred from the officer corps in the process.[186] Ignoring wartime censorship, he often questioned the content of official communiqués. He primarily criticized General Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937) and Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz (1849–1930). As early as 1920, they were the subjects of a short book he wrote.[187] Two years later, Ludendorff was the direct

184 Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., p. 29. Even after the war ended, Delbrück claimed that Wilhelm II genuinely did not want the war and, in fact, did not have a warlike character: Charles à Court Repington, *After the War*, *cit*., p. 261.

185 Hans Delbrück, *Krieg und Politik*, 1, *cit*.; *ibid*., 2, *1916–1917*, Stilke, Berlin 1919; *ibid*., 3. On the nature and significance of the aforementioned analyses: Martin Hobohm, «Delbrück, Clausewitz und die Kritik des Weltkrieges,» *PJ*, 181, 1920, pp. 202–232; Ernst Buchfinck, «Delbrücks Lehre, das Heer und der Weltkrieg,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 41–49; Friedrich C. Scheibe, «Marne und Gorlice: Zur Kriegsdeutung Hans Delbrücks,» *MZ*, 53, 1994, pp. 355–376.

186 Theodor Heuss, *Erinnerungen 1905–1933*, Rainer, Tübingen 1963, p. 461.

187 Hans Delbrück, *Ludendorff, Tirpitz, Falkenhayn*, Curtius, Berlin 1920. See also Id., «Falken-

target of a dedicated pamphlet. Ludendorff was portrayed as a mentally limited and uncultured man who was so consumed by megalomania who could not recognize his own cognitive limitations. According to Delbrück, Germany's misunderstanding of Clausewitz's description of the relationship between war and politics led to disaster, as did the misassessment of the state's military potential and the resulting excessive demands on the Entente.[188] He advocated for a defensive war to demonstrate Germany's lack of expansionist inclinations. He also accused Ludendorff of being unaware of the only possible outcome of war: complete victory for one side, as in the wars fought by Friedrich II. Consequently, Ludendorff was unable to develop an effective military strategy or align diplomatic and domestic priorities with it. In Delbrück's opinion, Ludendorff was one of the main architects of Germany's defeat.[189]

When presenting his perspective on the course of World War I, Ludendorff acknowledged the work of Clausewitz and Schlieffen, yet rejected their conclusions, believing them to be inapplicable to the new era.[190] He advocated for the concept of "total war" (*totaler Krieg*), meaning a war involving all aspects of citizens' lives. According to Ludendorff, in the event of armed conflict, all power should be concentrated in the hands of the commander-in-chief because, during war, the will of the nation is most fully expressed through striving toward a common goal. Delbrück revealed a fundamental issue overlooked by Ludendorff: defining the state's goal in a way acceptable to the majority of society. Delbrück's approach contrasted with Ludendorff's idea of imposing a goal by the supreme commander in anticipation of absolute obedience to his vision.

Delbrück's influence on the course of the Great War extended beyond shaping public opinion through *Preußische Jahrbücher*. He also took initiatives aimed at compelling leading politicians and military figures of the time to take specific actions.

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hayn und Ludendorff,» *PJ*, 180, 1920, pp. 249–281.

188 Id., *Ludendorffs Selbstporträt, Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft*, Berlin 1922.

189 *Ibid*., pp. 8–9. More broadly on Delbrück's campaign against Ludendorff: Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 182–192; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik. Der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1914–1956*, Schöningh, Paderborn 2002, pp. 261–262; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 316–340.

190 Erich Ludendorff, *Der totale Krieg*, Ludendorffs Verlag, München 1935.

On October 14, 1914, an appeal by intellectuals known as the "Manifesto of the 93" was published. Some of the signatories were associated with the New Fatherland League (Bund Neues Vaterland). They condemned the idea of territorial annexations in the West, demanded resolving international conflicts diplomatically, and called for an end to arms production. Signatories included Delbrück, Harnack, Brentano, and Albert Einstein (1879–1955). The appeal went largely unnoticed because German society was still under the influence of the patriotic enthusiasm generated by entering the war and its initial successes.[191]

A more significant initiative was the response to the *Seeberg-Addresse*, a petition by Reinhold Seeberg (1859–1935) on June 20, 1915. The petition was signed by 1,347 men, including 352 academics, such as Meyer and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. Inspired by the Pan-German League, Seeberg opposed the government's cautious policies and demanded the expansion of the Reich's borders at the expense of neighboring countries. Inspired by Theodor Wolff (1868–1943), the editor-in-chief of *Berliner Tageblatt*, and Bernhard Dernburg (1865–1937), a former colonial secretary, Delbrück drafted a counterpetition known as the *Delbrück–Dernburg Petition*. In it, he defined the main goal as defending the sovereignty of the German state and the right of its inhabitants to live safely and develop. He only managed to get 141 signatures, including Harnack, Schmoller, Troeltsch, Einstein, Max Planck (1858–1947), Max Weber (1864–1920), and Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936). The Reich Chancellor and Prussian Prime Minister, Bethmann Hollweg, who remained on friendly terms with Delbrück, refused to accept the *Seeberg-Addresse* but publicly received the *Delbrück–Dernburg Petition*.[192]

191 Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., pp. 22–23, 33; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., pp. 551–553; Czesław Madajczyk, *Klerk czy intelektualista zaangażowany?* Świat polityków wobec twórców kultury i naukowców europejskich w pierwszej połowie XX wieku. Panorama, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 1999, p. 48; Karlheinz Lipp, *Berliner Friedenspfarrer und der Erste Weltkrieg*, Centaurus, Freiburg 2013, pp. 159–161; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 318–319. The New Fatherland League was founded in 1914 but was outlawed two years later on charges of anti-state activities. Its members included Delbrück, Brentano, and Einstein, among others.

192 Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 232–233; Klaus Schwabe, «Ursprung und Verbreitung,» *cit*., pp. 113–114, 122–138; Id., *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., pp. 70–73; Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933*, Wesleyan University Press, Cambridge, MA 1969, pp. 190–192; Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, 3,

The extent to which the Germans were emotionally invested in the ongoing war, fueled by pervasive propaganda, horrified Delbrück and his inner circle. In a letter to Lenz dated August 9, 1914, Delbrück asked rhetorically how war could be combined with high culture.[193] Lehmann shared a similar view. In a letter to Delbrück dated May 31, 1915, he wrote about the psychosis of his fellow Germans and their political behavior, which he said was unworthy of their Germano-Roman heritage.[194] Along with Meinecke, Weber, and Otto Hoetzsch (1876–1946), Delbrück publicly appealed for political leadership to regain primacy over the military because he foresaw the disastrous consequences of reversing their relationship.[195]

Years later, Bernhard von Bülow (1849–1929), who was the German Chancellor from 1900 to 1909, offered a critical summary of Delbrück's political activity. A declared enemy of Bethmann Hollweg, Bülow first accused Delbrück of belonging to his political circle[196] and then subjected him to a barrage of insults.[197] Bülow even accused Delbrück of ruining relations with Great Britain[198] and denied him the right to call himself a historian.[199] An additional motive behind Bülow's unreserved attack would be his resentment of the "father of military history" criticizing his activities. In Bülow's view, Delbrück was a

University of Miami Press, Coral Gables 1972, p. 72; Luciano Canfora, *Cultura classica e crisi tedesca. Gli scritti politici di Wilamowitz 1914–1931*, De Donato, Bari 1977, p. 212; Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866–1945*, Oxford University Press, New York 1978, pp. 361–362; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 92–93; Id., «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *cit*., p. 523; Czesław Madajczyk, *Klerk czy intelektualista*, *cit*., p. 40; Piotr Mikietyński, *Niemiecka droga ku Mitteleuropie*, *cit*., p. 95; Charles E. McClelland, «Öffentlicher Raum und politische Kultur,» *cit*., pp. 633–634; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 58–59; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 336, 348–350. Reprint of Delbrück's correspondence regarding obtaining signatories for the *Delbrück-Dernburg Petition*: Luciano Canfora, *Cultura classica e crisi tedesca*, *cit*., pp. 215–241.

193 Publication of the letter: Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., p. 32.

194 Publication of the letter: *ibid*.

195 *Ibid*., p. 49.

196 Bernard von Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 1, Ullstein, Berlin 1930, p. 220.

197 *Ibid*., pp. 112, 563; *ibid*., 2, Ullstein, Berlin 1930, p. 464; *ibid*., 3, Ullstein, Berlin 1931, p. 249; *ibid*., 4, Ullstein, Berlin 1931, p. 285.

198 *Ibid*., 1, p. 413.

199 *Ibid*., 2, p. 285.

complete amateur when it came to politics.[200]

On December 24, 1915, Delbrück wrote to Ludendorff to strongly protest against the violation of Belgium's neutrality and the plans to annex part of French territory. He emphasized the need to acquire new colonies (preferably at Great Britain's expense) and to push Russia eastward through unspecified political changes.[201] In retrospect, Delbrück admitted to being overly optimistic about the achievable outcome of the war.[202] Unfortunately, Ludendorff's response has not been preserved. Considering the critical journalism regularly published in *Preußische Jahrbücher*, it is difficult to imagine any response other than a courteous letter written in a formal tone, if any.

In 1914, Falkenhayn, a general and proponent of Delbrück's historical works, was appointed Chief of the Great General Staff. In January 1916, he organized a meeting in Berlin with the "father of military history." Afterwards, he reportedly decided to adopt the "strategy of attrition," which was subsequently implemented on the Western Front. The strategy's failure resulted in Falkenhayn's resignation in 1916. If this account of events is true, it represents the pinnacle of Delbrück's influence on the course of World War I.[203]

None of the political activities were conducive to focusing on historical work. To make matters worse, the Berlin professor was dealing with a personal drama. His eldest son, Waldemar, fell on the Macedonian front in 1917.[204] Delbrück was deeply affected by his loss, which negatively impacted his physical and mental health.[205] In 1921, Lieutenant Colonel Charles à Court Repington (1858–1925) visited him and was struck by how much he had aged and become embittered since their last meeting in 1914. Court Repington was also saddened by how Delbrück had lost faith in friendship among European intellectuals. Del-

200 *Ibid*.

201 The content of the letter was summarized in: Hans Delbrück, «Die strategische Grundfrage des Weltkrieges,» *PJ*, 183, 1921, p. 305.

202 *Ibid*.

203 Arden Bucholz, «Introduction,» *cit*., pp. 28–29; Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion,» *cit*., pp. XXVI–XXVII. See also Wilhelm Deist, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 383. At the initiative of Delbrück, Falkenhayn received an honorary doctorate from the University of Berlin in 1915.

204 His body was laid to rest in the Delbrück family grave in Berlin-Grünewald. His parents, Hans and Lina, are also buried there.

205 Charles à Court Repington, *After the War*, *cit*., p. 261.

brück only came alive when explaining the intricacies of the battle tactics used by the ancient Greeks.[206]

As early as 1916, Delbrück, Meinecke, and Brentano began leaning toward an attitude described as "realpolitik pacifism" (*realpolitischer Pazifismus*). In their view, the ongoing war had demonstrated the futility of resolving international disputes through armed conflict because it devastates economies and poisons people's minds.[207] By 1918, Delbrück was anxiously asking what had become of the German nation's attachment to freedom and idealism since they were allowing a military dictatorship to be imposed on them, step by step.[208] The triumph of chauvinism and nationalism signaled the demise of his political vision and the transformation of German culture.

Delbrück's pessimism was also influenced by his observations of the evolving international situation from 1918 to 1919. As a member of the expert commission accompanying the German peace delegation in Versailles, he witnessed firsthand the atmosphere of the negotiations, which was far from an attempt to understand the Central Powers' perspective and avoid revanchism. Resisting the declaration of Germany's sole guilt for the outbreak of World War I was crucial for him. Working under the formal leadership of Foreign Minister Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau (1869–1928) and alongside other commission members—including Weber, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1874–1936), and Max Montgelas (1860–1938)—Delbrück was given three days to prepare a response to the Entente's memorandum. Ultimately, Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles included a statement of the Central Powers' exclusive guilt.[209]

In subsequent years, far-right activists used Delbrück's presence in Versailles as a way to discredit his political activities. In their eyes, he had become a man

206 *Ibid*., pp. 261–263.

207 Hans Delbrück, «Realpolitischer Pazifismus,» *PJ*, 166, 1916, pp. 177–187; Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., pp. 116, 167–168, 177.

208 Hans Delbrück, «Politische Korrespondenz,» *PJ*, 171, 1918, pp. 129–132.

209 Max Montgelas, «Was ich von Delbrück gelernt habe,» in Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit. Eine Erinnerungsgabe, Hans Delbrück dem Achtzigjährigen von Freunden und Schülern*, Hobbing, Berlin 1928, pp. 50–55; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 127; Id., «Introduction,» *cit*., pp. 34–35; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 186–201; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 419–420.

General Erich von Falkenhayn (1861–1922).

who had participated in the "betrayal of the fatherland." The emotions associated with this accusation were so intense that, in 1919, the University of Berlin authorities did not allow him to deliver a speech commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.[210] In the 1930s, supporters of the Nazi regime posthumously sought revenge on Delbrück by collectively ignoring or denying the value of his work. The most influential custodians of his memory were émigré scholars, particularly those who went to the United States.[211]

Because of the growing political tensions, Delbrück concluded that he could no longer effectively influence public opinion through *Preußische Jahrbücher*. In 1919, after holding the position since 1883, he resigned as editor-in-chief. In his farewell essay to readers, he did not dwell excessively on his underlying motives.[212] The new editor, Walter Schotte (1886–1958), belonged to a different generation and made no secret of his nationalist sympathies. Schotte held the position of editor-in-chief until 1927, when he was replaced by Walter Heynen (1889–1973) and Daniels. Both of them were students of Delbrück. After several ownership changes, the journal survived until 1935.[213]

Until the end of his life, Delbrück tried to combat two narratives: the idea of Germany's full responsibility for the outbreak of the Great War (*Kriegsschuldlüge*) and the "stab in the back" (*Dolchstoß*), one of the most popular explanations for Germany's defeat. In the first case, he was opposed by politicians and publicists of the victorious Entente,[214] and in the second case, by radicalized compatriots absorbing far-right propaganda and displaying increasing aggression in public life. He was deeply concerned about nationalists taking over the universities and feared the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution.[215] He made a

210 Friedrich Meinecke, «Vermichtes [Hans Delbrück],» *HZ*, 140, 3, 1929, p. 703.

211 Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America 1815–1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1994, pp. 177, 180–181; Ralf Pröve, «La nouvelle histoire militaire de l'époque moderne en Allemagne. Approches, problèmes et perspectives,» in André Corvisier, Dumitru Preda (ed.), *Guerre et société en Europe. Perspectives et nouvelles recherches*, Europa Nova, Bucarest 2004, p. 233.

212 Hans Delbrück, «Abschied,» *cit*., pp. 369–372.

213 Sibylle Obenaus, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften*, *cit*., p. 55; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., pp. 60–62.

214 On the course of the polemics with foreign publicists: Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 248–284.

215 Charles à Court Repington, *After the War*, *cit*., p. 262.

fundamental error in his assessment of the situation by considering secret military organizations to be entirely unserious entities that people would soon cease to see as representatives of German interests.[216]

In 1919, the German parliament decided to establish a commission to investigate the events that led to the outbreak, continuation, and loss of the war (*Ausbruch, zur Verlängerung und zum Verlust des Weltkrieges*). Delbrück was a member of the commission until 1928. He was hired as an expert on the subcommittee dealing with military issues.[217] In 1925 and 1928, volumes containing his analyses were published in which he openly criticized the highest-ranking commanders, particularly Ludendorff and Tirpitz.[218]

The fourth volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, dedicated to the modern era, was published in the early 1920s. Smaller than the first and third volumes, it raised concerns about its content. Indeed, it turned out to be the weakest part of the tetralogy. Much of the discussion about the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries repeated previously published arguments. Delbrück's characteristic socio-economic perspective, which had previously brought him widespread recognition, was absent. Instead, he included a summary of his disputes with representatives of the German military historical service, thus closing the topic.[219] He also abandoned his original intention to conclude the narrative with the wars of Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder (1800–1891), i.e., the

216 *Ibid*., pp. 262–263.

217 Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung zur heutigen Militärgeschichte,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, p. 30; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 128–130; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 201–221.

218 Hans Delbrück et al., *Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Verfassunggebenden Deutschen Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstags. Reihe 4. Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918. 1. Abteilung. Der militärische Zusammenbruch, 3. Gutachten der Sachverständigen General d. Inf. a. D. von Kuhl u. Geheimrat Prof. Dr. H. Delbrück*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, Berlin 1925; Hans Delbrück et al., *Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Verfassunggebenden Deutschen Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstags. Reihe 4. Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918. Gutachten der Sachverständigen von Kuhl, Schwertfeger, Delbrück, Katzenstein, Herz, Volkmann zur »Dolchstoß«-Frage*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, Berlin 1928.

219 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., pp. 495–501.

years 1864–1871. He believed that World War I was their logical development and described it, along with the roots of European military systems at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in *Krieg und Politik*.[220] *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* was a purely academic project, not a journalistic one, which resulted in a clear difference in the form of the two works.

The *terminus ante quem* was set at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. In hindsight, the most valuable parts of the book seem to be those dealing with the Renaissance's impact on military affairs in Italy and the Netherlands, as well as the Landsknechts.[221] Much credit goes to the doctoral collaboration with Hobohm, whom Delbrück frequently cited and praised by name in the introduction to the fourth volume.[222] During this period, Hobohm was Delbrück's closest student. In 1920, Delbrück unsuccessfully tried to establish a Chair of Military History for him at the University of Berlin.[223]

The fourth volume appears to have been written more out of a sense of duty than passion. Starting in 1916, Delbrück leaned more toward pacifism. The prevalence of war themes during the Great War may have instilled in him a disgust for military matters. His political shift partially explains the synthetic form and dispassionate style, neither of which detracts from the substantive value of the arguments presented.

In celebration of the completion of the tetralogy, which was Delbrück's life's work, the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* was reprinted with final corrections and a new preface. The third editions of volumes two and three were published in 1921.

Delbrück then returned to his political duties. As early as 1920, the Historical Commission for the Reich Archive (Historische Kommission für das Reichsarchiv) was established. Its composition varied over time, with fourteen to sixteen members, including nine to eleven professors and five government officials.

220 *Ibid*., [pp. IX–X].

221 *Ibid*., pp. 3–148.

222 *Ibid*., [p. XI].

223 Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 142; Wilhelm Deist, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 382; Jonas Klein, »Der Prophet des Staatsgedankens«, *cit*., p. 39; Id., «Hans Delbrücks ‚unbekannte' Schüler,» *cit*., p. 123. Hobohm's long-standing difficulties in securing permanent employment at a university led him to unsuccessfully apply for a position at the University of Liverpool in 1914: *ibid*.

The commission's task was to analyze documents and determine the causes of the Great War defeat. At the request of his friends, Meinecke, Walter Goetz (1867–1958), Hermann Oncken (1869–1945), and Gustav Mayer (1871–1948), Delbrück was chosen as the commission's main spokesperson. While effectively serving as chairman, Delbrück approached the problem from multiple perspectives, considering political, military, economic, and sociocultural aspects, as he did in his historical work. However, he was outvoted in favor of adopting a "general staff perspective," which was easier to implement in cooperation with non-specialists and military officers.[224]

At least Delbrück managed to secure Hobohm's employment as an archivist at the Reich Archive in Potsdam. The new job did not improve Hobohm's situation. He quickly clashed with the other archivists at his new workplace because he focused on researching cases of chauvinism and social inequality in the German Army. He also became isolated because the Pan-German League, which he and Delbrück despised, still held significant influence over state institutions.[225]

The multi-volume report on the work of the Historical Commission for the Reich Archives, along with an extensive appendix of selected documents, was published in 1922. During a parliamentary session, Delbrück summarized the report's conclusions, completely debunking the myth of squandering the successes of heroic German soldiers by internal traitors. He attributed the cause of the defeat to misjudging the political situation, the collapse of the economy, and declining soldier morale. At the same time, Delbrück emphasized the falseness of the allegations about Germany's full responsibility for the outbreak of World War I, though Germany did contribute to the escalation of the recent conflict at

224 On Delbrück's work on the Commission: Emil Daniels, «Delbrück als Politiker,» *cit*., pp. 26–27; Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., pp. 29–30; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 142–145; Id., «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *cit*., p. 523; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» *cit*., pp. 350–352; Wilhelm Deist, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., pp. 381–382; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik*, *cit*., pp. 28–29, 94–108; Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion,» *cit*., p. XVIII; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 377–387.

225 Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, *cit*., p. 119; Wilhelm Deist, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 382; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik*, *cit*., pp. 118–119; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., p. 386; Jonas Klein, «Hans Delbrücks ‚unbekannte' Schüler,» *cit*., pp. 123–124.

various times.[226]

Subsequently, Delbrück became involved in the work of the Central Office for Research on the Causes of War (Zentralstelle für Erforschung der Kriegsursachen), which was established in 1921. Although it was formally a private institution, it was actually funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[227]

Delbrück's final involvement with state institutions occurred when he agreed to serve as an expert in the Munich "stab in the back" trial (*Münchner Dolchstoßprozess*). His opinion on the matter was just as clear as it had been in 1922. Advocating the "stab in the back" theory indicated, at best, a complete misunderstanding of the situation by its supporters and, at worst, intentions to stage a coup.[228]

Delbrück remained a monarchist and was reluctant to accept the Weimar Republic. He thought the Germans were politically immature and believed their naïveté and susceptibility to extremism would lead to the republican experiment's failure.[229] He understood, however, that the new political reality was a consequence of losing the war and should be respected. He had difficulty accepting certain elements of the Weimar Republic, such as the new national flag. He repeatedly called for abandoning political radicalism and focusing on rebuilding the state. In 1926, he signed a petition by 64 professors advocating for a constructive attitude toward the republican system and an end to questioning its legitimacy.[230] He also regularly called for renouncing revenge in international

226 Hans Delbrück, «[Bericht],» in *Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Deutschen Verfassunggebenden Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstages 1919–1926. Die Ursachen des Deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918*, 3, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1922, pp. 239–273.

227 Imanuel Geiss, «Die manipulierte Kriegsschuldfrage,» *MZ*, 34, 2, 1983, pp. 36–37. The organization survived until 1937, gradually shifting its profile toward an increasingly nationalist one.

228 Arden Bucholz, «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *cit*., p. 523; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik*, *cit*., pp. 271–277; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 359–374.

229 Hans Delbrück, *Krieg und Politik*, 2, *cit*., pp. 277–279; Charles à Court Repington, *After the War*, *cit*., pp. 261–262.

230 Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu*, *cit*., pp. 275–282; Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins*, *cit*., pp. 202–103; Czesław Madajczyk, *Klerk czy intelektualista*, *cit*., p. 225; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 127–138, 171–181; Id., «Hans Delbrück als „Kassandra",» *cit*., pp. 323–324.

politics.[231]

Delbrück retired in 1921. He applied again for the establishment of a Chair of Military History but was rejected once more.[232]

His final significant project was a five-volume world history titled *Weltgeschichte*, which adhered closely to Ranke's historiographical approach. As the subtitle, *Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Berlin 1896–1920*, indicates, the work is based on lectures Delbrück delivered at the University of Berlin between 1896 and 1920. Subsequent volumes were published year after year, starting in 1924.[233] They cover the period from antiquity to 1888, the year of German Emperor Wilhelm I's death, in chronological order.

Delbrück's final monumental work was not a publishing success. Appearing too late to become the subject of multifaceted analyses or even lively discussions, it gave the impression of being a noble relic of the past, deeply rooted in the Wilhelmine era and stubbornly ignoring the national emotions aroused by World War I.[234] The idea of writing universal history in this manner originated in the nineteenth century. After 1918, it was not necessarily an intentional attempt by German professors to regain their former position in their homeland's intellectual life.[235] All of this makes *Weltgeschichte* primarily a memento of a certain stage in the German historiography and the life of its author. Even in the 1920s,

231 Michael Grüttner, «Nachkriegszeit,» *cit*., p. 58; Christian Lüdtke, *Hans Delbrück und Weimar*, *cit*., pp. 103–115.

232 Eckart Kehr, «Neuere deutsche Geschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., p. 255 (characteristics of the state of German historiography in 1931). Delbruck's lack of illusions is evidenced by: Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. X].

233 Id., *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*.; *ibid*., 2, *Das Mittelalter. 300–1400*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1925; *ibid*., 3, *Neuzeit bis zum Tode Friedrichs des Großen (1400–1789)*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1926; *ibid*., 4, *Neuzeit. Die Revolutionsperiode von 1789 bis 1852*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1927; *ibid*., 5, *Neuzeit von 1852 bis 1888*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1928.

234 Similarly: Andreas Hillgruber, «Hans Delbrück,» in Hans-Ulrich Wehler (ed.), *Deutsche Historiker*, 4, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1972, p. 46. More broadly on Delbrück's attitude toward the changes taking place in the world of academia, using the example of the work being described: Alexander Thomas, «Geschichtsschreibung und Autobiographie. Hans Delbrück in seiner „Weltgeschichte",» in Wolfgang Hardtwig (ed.), *Die Vergangenheit der Weltgeschichte. Universalhistorisches Denken in Berlin 1800–1933*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2010, pp. 195–215.

235 Cf. Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., p. 181.

it was rarely used, and today, it is nearly forgotten.

After finishing *Weltgeschichte*, Delbrück did not write any more books. In agreement with his mentor, Daniels undertook the task of continuing *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* using Delbrück's collected materials. The fifth volume, covering the period from 1815 to 1870, was published in 1928.[236] However, it was not on par with Delbrück's work. Like the fourth volume, it offered a traditional perspective on the subject. There were only a few threads from the fields of social or economic history. Descriptions of organization, armament, strategy, and tactics, enriched with extensive analyses of selected campaigns, dominated. Daniels' work remains relatively unknown today because, despite its good academic quality, it had no impact on the evolution of military historiography.

In 1929, Delbrück was scheduled to deliver a speech at the University of Berlin in honor of the anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles. The ceremony was canceled due to pressure from Prussian Minister-President Otto Braun (1872–1955). Delbrück considered Braun's stance a setback for responsible politics intended to ease tensions, so he published the speech's text in *Preußische Jahrbücher*.[237] He then published the speech as a brochure, adding an annotation about the circumstances of the incident.[238]

This would be Delbrück's final publication. He did not live to see further volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* published, nor did he witness his homeland sliding into totalitarianism. He died on July 14, 1929, in Berlin. The previous year, his students and collaborators had published a volume summarizing his work in various fields.[239] From a contemporary researcher's perspective, the second *Festschrift* is extremely valuable because it is largely based on recollections and addresses themes not directly present in Delbrück's texts. The only missing element is his characterization as a promoter, which would significantly enrich our understanding of his ideas about historical education and working with sources. He is generally remembered as a person of strong character, somewhat

236 Emil Daniels, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 5, *Die Neuzeit (Fortsetzung)*, Stilke, Berlin 1928.

237 Hans Delbrück, «Der Friede von Versailles,» *PJ*, 217/218, 1929, pp. 58–71.

238 Id., *Der Friede von Versailles. Gedenkrede, geplant zu dem vom Ministerium untersagten Veranstaltung der 5 vereinigten Berliner Hochschulen am 28. Juni 1929*, Stilke, Berlin 1929.

239 Emil Daniels, Paul Rühlmann (ed.), *Am Webstuhl der Zeit*, *cit*.

despotic, and concerned with ensuring the consistency of his students' findings with his own historiographical concepts.[240]

Thirty-four years later, Haintz reminisced about how Delbrück encouraged his students to choose research topics related to his work. He maintained the high quality of their dissertations by diligently fulfilling his role as their supervisor. He then used some of the factual findings from his students' work, citing them honestly. Such an approach enabled him to expedite his research.[241]

Daniels continued working on *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, resulting in the publication of its sixth volume, which was released in three parts in 1929, 1931, and 1932, respectively.[242] The book is entirely dedicated to the Franco-Prussian War, marking a departure from Delbrück's original concept. The political atmosphere at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s caused the second and third parts to be written in the spirit of Prussian triumphalism, a concept foreign to Delbrück. In terms of its approach to the subject, the work represented a return to the "general staff perspective," evidenced by the accumulation of details and lack of a broader perspective.

The cycle closed in 1936.[243] Haintz joined Daniels as the second author. Their volume contains characterizations of the American Civil War (1861–1865), the Boer Wars (1880–1881 and 1899–1902), and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). The authors chose not to address World War I because doing so would have risked over-politicizing the description. Considering the book's publication year, this would have been unavoidable given the Nazi establishment's involvement in the historical policy. Like the sixth volume, the new one also had little to do with Delbrück's original concept.

240 Jonas Klein, «Hans Delbrücks ‚unbekannte' Schüler,» *cit*., pp. 125–128.

241 Otto Haintz, «Einleitung,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., De Gruyter, Berlin 1962, p. XVI.

242 Emil Daniels, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 6, 1, *Die Politik verdirbt die Strategie. Der deutsch-französische Krieg 1870–1871*, Stilke, Berlin 1929; *ibid*., 6, 2, *Masse gegen Qualität. Der deutsch-französische Krieg 1870–1871*, Stilke, Berlin 1931; *ibid*., 6, 3, *Die Völker lernen nichts aus der Geschichte. Der deutsch-französische Krieg 1870–1871*, Stilke, Berlin 1932.

243 Emil Daniels, Otto Haintz, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 7, *Die Neuzeit (Schluß)*, Stilke, Berlin 1936.

In 1908, the editors of a volume published for the sixtieth birthday of a Berlin professor expressed their belief in the inevitable establishment of his research school. According to the editors, Delbrück's school had already begun to take shape.[244] The passage of time has proven these predictions wrong.[245] The University of Berlin rejected the idea of establishing a Chair of Military History twice (in 1920 and 1921), and the "historians in military uniforms" were hostile to Delbrück's students, which resulted in a formal ban on hiring them at the War Academy (Kriegsakademie).[246] Supporters of Delbrück's interpretation who were members of the military historical service could not speak out for fear of harassment.[247] Without institutional support, maintaining the research direction initiated by Delbrück was difficult in terms of both topics and methodology. Meinecke wrote that Delbrück's arrogance in the field of philology prevented him from having a spectacular career.[248] The fierceness with which he engaged in polemics was also intended to create obstacles.[249] Although Delbrück played a significant role in historical discourse at the time, his specialty was more tolerated than affirmed. The political changes taking place in Germany in the 1930s did not help his cause either, as people did not forget his fighting against militarism and nationalistic tendencies. His students' greatest achievement was adding further volumes to *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*. Their efforts can be considered a way of keeping Delbrück's memory alive, but little more.

Delbrück was never invited to join the Prussian Academy of Sciences (Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften). His case was not an isolated incident, nor should it be seen as a manifestation of discrimination. Delbrück was probably too individualistic, independent, and confrontational to fit into the

244 Emil Daniels, Konrad Lehmann, Gustav Roloff, «Vorwort,» *cit*., p. 13.

245 The first person to write about Delbrück's failure to create his own research school was: Eckart Kehr, «Neuere deutsche Geschichtsschreibung,» in Id., *Der Primat der Innenpolitik. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur preußisch-deutschen Sozialgeschichte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1965, p. 255 (the original paper was published in 1931). Years later, the opposite stance was presented by: Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab. Die friderizianischen Kriege in der amtlichen deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1890–1914*, Rombach, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, pp. 13 n. 8, 164.

246 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. X].

247 *Ibid*.

248 Friedrich Meinecke, «Vermichtes [Hans Delbrück],» *cit.*, p. 703.

249 Id., *Erlebtes*, *cit*., pp. 184–185.

Academy's system of dependencies and work organization.

It may appear that Delbrück ultimately failed in his attempt to ensure the survival of his ideas. In fact, such a belief would be simply incorrect. Every university historian specializing in military history belongs to his research school simply by reproducing its fundamental principles. It is hard to imagine a greater impact on the development of academic historiography than creating a new field of study that has flourished for over a century. Delbrück died at the age of eighty-one and must have been aware of the radical changes in the study of military history since 1881. He was fully responsible for those changes in Germany and, sometimes indirectly, throughout the whole Western world.

Chapter 2

Historiographical views

Although Hans Delbrück was formally a student of Heinrich von Sybel, the two had fundamentally different understandings of history. Sybel, who obtained his doctorate in 1838 based on a dissertation written under the supervision of Leopold von Ranke, began moving away from Ranke's preferred historiographical model as early as the 1850s. He turned toward a national perspective deeply rooted in Romanticism, which was strongly associated with the belief in the necessity of political engagement by intellectuals, including academic staff. Sybel was one of the pillars of the so-called Prussian Historical School, the creation of which is symbolically attributed to Johann G. B. Droysen (1808–1884). The formation of the School was not the work of a single author and was a response to the needs of a part of society influenced by liberal-nationalist ideas.[1] Sybel shared Droysen's Prussian-centric research orientation and openly supported Otto von Bismarck's unification policy. In contrast, Ranke usually maintained a distance from current political issues.[2]

1 Characteristics of the Prussian Historical School: Friedrich Meinecke, «Johann Gustav Droysen. Ein Briefwechsel und seine Geschichtsschreibung,» in Id., *Staat und Persönlichkeit*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1933, pp. 98–135; Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, 2nd ed., Wesleyan University Press, Middleton 1983, pp. 90–123; Robert Southard, *Droysen and the Prussian School of History*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington 1995; Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, wyd. 3, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2011, pp. 487–500; Benedikt Stuchtey, «German Historical Writing,» in Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguashca, Attila Pók (ed.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, 4, *1800–1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, pp. 168–177.

2 Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes 1862–1901*, Koehler & Amelang, Leipzig 1941, pp. 185–186; Volker Dotterweich, *Heinrich von Sybel. Geschichtswissenschaft in politischer Absicht (1817–1861)*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1978, pp. 169–319. See also Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, *cit*., pp. 116–123; Robert Southard, *Droysen and the Prussian School*, *cit*., pp. 97–111; Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, *cit*., pp. 493–495.

After obtaining his doctorate, Delbrück contacted Ranke,[3] the doyen of German historians, whose scholarly perspective was closest to his own.[4] Following Ranke, Delbrück believed that history should be written universally because individual events are interconnected and must be studied in relation to each other.[5] Thus, he rejected the narrow national perspective, considering it to distort the historian's cognitive process and conclusions.[6] However, his activity in the public sphere, both as a parliamentarian and as a publicist, brought him closer to representatives of the Prussian Historical School. One of Delbrück's constant assumptions was hostility toward Bismarck, which immediately placed him outside the increasingly influential circle of historians who affirmed the actions of the "Iron Chancellor." Delbrück's progressive views and rejection of Prussian centrism also place him among the neo-Rankeans, alongside figures such as Friedrich Meinecke, Max Lehmann, Max Lenz, and Walter Goetz.[7]

3 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, [p. X]; Martin Hobohm, *Hans Delbrück der Siebzigjährige*, Engelmann, Berlin 1918, p. 6.

4 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte. Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Berlin 1896–1920*, 1, *Das Altertum (bis 300 n. Chr.)*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1924, pp. 8–10; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. LVI.

5 Id., «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *PJ*, 60, 1887, p. 610; Id., *Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen*, Reimer, Berlin 1890, pp. I–IV; Id., *Regierung und Volkswille*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1914, pp. III–IV; Id., *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., pp. 12, 25–26; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LI–LII; *ibid*., 4, [p. X]. Cf. Friedrich Meinecke, «Vermichtes [Hans Delbrück],» *HZ*, 140, 3, 1929, p. 703. Ranke most fully expressed his views on universal history in an unpublished text that appeared only in 1954, after his death: Eberhard Kessel, «Rankes Idee der Universalhistorie,» *HZ*, 178, 2, 1954, pp. 269–308.

6 Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück (1848–1929),» in Bernadotte E. Schmitt (ed.), *Some Historians of Modern Europe: Essays in Historiography*, Kennikat Press, Chicago 1942, pp. 100–101; Andreas Hillgruber, «Hans Delbrück,» in Hans-Ulrich Wehler (ed.), *Deutsche Historiker*, 4, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1972, p. 40; Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion. Hans Delbrück und der Krieg in der Geschichte,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. XXIX.

7 Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, *cit*., p. 185; Id., *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin 1901–1919. Erinnerungen*, Koehler, Stuttgart 1949, pp. 155–156; Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück (1848–1929),» *cit*., pp. 124–125; Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück als Historiker und Politiker,» *Die Sammlung*, 4, 1949, pp. 139–140; Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu niemieckiego w dobie wilhelmińskiej. Poglądy polityczne Hansa Delbrücka*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 1961, pp. 76–78, 81–82; Id., *Z dziejów niemieckiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX wieku.*

The culmination of Delbrück's neo-Rankean approach was a large-scale project to write a multivolume world history. Like Ranke, he believed in the ability of successive generations to recount history anew. Delbrück's view stems not only from the accumulation of usable data but also from the evolution of worldviews.[8] Between 1924 and 1928, Delbrück achieved his goal, concluding the narrative contained in five volumes with the events of 1888.[9]

Delbrück's periodization reflects his interactions with representatives of the Prussian Historical School. The third volume of *Weltgeschichte* ends with the death of Friedrich II, and the fifth volume ends with the death of Wilhelm I. Was the collapse of the Spanish colonial empire truly less significant than Prussia's emergence as a European power? What about France, the Netherlands, or Great Britain? The symbolic death of the monarch during whose reign Germany was unified marks the end of an era. Without denying the importance of the themes and figures chosen by Delbrück, it is clear that his perspective was somewhat tainted by Prussian centrism. His periodization immediately calls into question the possibility of his work appealing to readers outside the German cultural sphere.[10] The highlighted problem also demonstrates the compatibility of neo-

Eseje filozoficzno-historyczne, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 1965, pp. 41–42, 81; Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1972, p. 181; Andreas Hillgruber, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 49; Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, *cit*., pp. 131–132, 199–228; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City 1985, pp. 22, 40; Id., «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *The Historian*, 55, 3, 1993, p. 521; Dieter Hertz-Eichenrode, «Die „Neuere Geschichte" an der Berliner Universität. Historiker und Geschichtsschreibung im 19./20. Jahrhundert,» in Reimer Hansen, Wolfgang Ribbe (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Berlin im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Persönlichkeiten und Institutionen*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1992, p. 282; Otto G. Oexle, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeichen des Historismus. Studien zu Problemgeschichten der Moderne*, Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1996, pp. 99–100, 119–121; Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, *cit*., p. 510.

8 Leopold von Ranke, *Tagebücher*, 1, ed. Walther P. Fuchs, Oldenbourg, München 1964, p. 241.

9 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*.; *ibid*., 2, *Das Mittelalter. 300–1400*, Berlin 1925; *ibid*., 3, *Neuzeit bis zum Tode Friedrichs des Großen (1400–1789)*, Berlin 1926; *ibid*., 4, *Neuzeit. Die Revolutionsperiode von 1789 bis 1852*, Berlin 1927; *ibid*., 5, *Neuzeit von 1852 bis 1888*, Berlin 1928.

10 According to his declaration, Delbrück's description only included those states that made a significant contribution to the development of culture: *ibid*., 1, p. 28. The position cited was primarily intended to justify the marginalization of Asian and African cultures, but it also al-

rankism with nationalism, as long as it does not take the form of chauvinistic historical determinism.

Delbrück adopted the doctrine of historicism directly from Ranke.[11] According to its basic assumptions, historical phenomena are unique and should be evaluated based on the criteria developed within a given culture's era rather than a universal moral system (in the case of nineteenth-century Germany, a system derived from the Bible).[12] Historicism generally corresponded to the views of Georg W. F. Hegel,[13] whose ideas were close to Delbrück's through his maternal grandfather, Leopold von Henning.[14] Meinecke, who had a collegial relationship with Delbrück, held a similar viewpoint.[15]

The logical consequence of adopting historicism was Delbrück's rejection of the belief in the exact repeatability of historical phenomena and the possibility of deriving universal laws from them. Delbrück expressed this idea in the preface to the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*,[16] as well as in later publications.[17] Historicism also led him to criticize the idealism and universalism of historical thinking inherited from the Enlightenment, as well as the Marxist philosophy of history, which is based on

lows us to understand which civilizations he considered most important. He certainly considered Greek-Roman, British, and German cultures to be such, with an open dislike for Chinese or Russian culture.

11 In the relevant literature, it is also referred to as "classical historicism," "German historicism," or "individualistic historicism."

12 More about the doctrine of historicism: Jerzy Krasuski, *Z dziejów niemieckiej myśli*, *cit*., pp. 55–65, 107–123; Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, *cit*., pp. 63–89; Dietmar Rothermund, *Geschichte als Prozeß und Aussage. Eine Einführung in Theorien des historischen Wandels und der Geschichtsschreibung. Studienausgabe*, 2. Aufl., De Gruyter Oldenbourg, München 1995, pp. 87–104; Daniel Fulda, *Wissenschaft aus Kunst. Die Entstehung der modernen deutschen Geschichtsschreibung 1760–1860*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1996, pp. 267–295; Otto G. Oexle, *Geschichtswissenschaft*, *cit*., pp. 41–72; Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, *cit*., pp. 461–467, 473, 475.

13 Georg W. F. Hegel, *Wykłady z filozofii dziejów*, 1, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1958, pp. 10–11.

14 Direct reference to Hegel's influences: Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., p. 10.

15 He was the first to attempt to present a coherent characterization of historicism: Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, Oldenbourg, Berlin 1936.

16 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LVI. Less directly: *ibid*., 4, [p. IX].

17 Id., *Regierung und Volkswille*, *cit*., pp. III–IV; id., *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., p. 26.

evolution resulting from changes in the ownership of the means of production.[18]

In Delbrück's writings, the state is the highest form of social organization, the guarantor of development, and one of the most perfect products of culture.[19] Therefore, the history of military affairs cannot be described in isolation from the evolution of state institutions.[20] His belief aligned with the notion of the state's dominance over society, as its existence ensures freedom and moral order.[21] Such a perception was derived directly from Hegel's work[22] and appeared repeatedly in the publications of Ranke and his followers.[23] Focusing on the state enabled scholars to describe the earliest eras, such as antiquity and the Middle Ages, without searching for the origins of modern power structures within them. Acceptance of historicism eliminated the need to search for supposedly Germanic models of power, which were popular in the nineteenth century. Assumptions made by Delbrück thus automatically placed him in opposition to the German Historical School of legal history.

In his recognition of the superiority of the state, Delbrück did not disregard the phenomenon of community. His view is evident in his extensive consideration of social historical findings, among other things. He found the choice between masses and individuals to be a false dichotomy, outlined without awareness of the unique circumstances of each event.[24] A collective's ability to create

18 Id., *Die Marx'sche Geschichtsphilosophie*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1921; Friedrich Meinecke, *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin*, *cit*., pp. 155–156.

19 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., pp. 12, 15–17.

20 *Ibid*., p. 12.

21 *Ibid*., pp. 14–16. Delbrück considered freedom to be a supreme value, which is why he maintained that the state's interest becomes the interest of individuals only when the state safeguards individual freedom. Otherwise, it transforms into an oppressive entity: *ibid*., p. 19. Delbrück did not answer the question of what the subjects/citizens of an oppressive state should do. The open expression of this thought precisely in 1924, which was after the abolition of the monarchical system, does not seem accidental.

22 Georg W. F. Hegel, *Wykłady z filozofii dziejów*, 1, *cit*., p. 93; Id., *Zasady filozofii prawa*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1969, p. 329.

23 Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, *cit*., pp. 32–43; Daniel Fulda, *Wissenschaft aus Kunst*, *cit*., pp. 356, 373–374, 393; Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, *cit*., pp. 462, 476; Franziska Metzger, «Annäherungen an Staat und Historie im Geschichtsdenken des 19. Jahrhunderts,» in Walter Pauly, Klaus Ries (ed.), *Staat und Historie. Leitbilder und Fragestellungen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung vom Ende des 19. bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Nomos, Baden-Baden 2021, pp. 24–25, 33–37.

24 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., pp. 23–24.

a state stems from its politicalness—a direct reference to the Greek concept of *politeia* (πολιτεία).[25] Max Weber held similar views on the political empowerment of communities, which, in such cases, become nations. However, Weber emphasized individual agency more clearly than Delbrück did.[26] For the Berlin historian, the existence of a state—or even the intention to establish one—was an indispensable condition for the emergence of the modern nation.[27] He did not pay much attention to national issues, perhaps precisely because he focused on the state, which could be associated with, but was not synonymous with, the modern concept of a nation, which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century.

The belief in the supremacy of the state is symbolically expressed in the title of Delbrück's most notable work. Such a perspective is fully understandable, because, in antiquity and the Middle Ages, military duties were closely linked to socio-political status. Soldiering could only be discussed in relation to imperial Rome, mercenary troops, and, in some areas, bodyguards. If Delbrück had limited himself to characterizing military structures, weaponry, and the course of conflicts as earlier authors did, he would have missed the significant cost of understanding the fundamental context in which all these aspects appeared. Delbrück perceived war as merely one form of human activity, akin to work, politics, family life, or literary and artistic creation. As such, war cannot be separated from the totality of social phenomena.[28] For his time, Delbrück's approach was revolutionary, though it fell within the historicist framework he inherited from Ranke.[29]

The spread of his ideas faced serious resistance. As late as 1924, Delbrück wrote about some academics who portrayed war as an unwanted byproduct of

25 *Ibid*., pp. 14–15; Annelise Thimme, *Hans Delbrück als Kritiker der Wilhelminischen Epoche*, Droste, Düsseldorf 1955, p. 10.

26 Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Die Wirtschaft und die gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen und Mächte. Nachlaß*, 1, *Gemeinschaften*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Michael Meyer, Max Weber Gesamtausgabe, 22, 1, Mohr (Siebeck), Tübingen 2001, pp. 185–190, 204–215, 222–247.

27 See Hans Delbrück, *Regierung und Volkswille*, *cit*.

28 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LI–LII; *ibid*., 4, [p. IX]. A similar thought, albeit in a reduced form, he expressed earlier in: Id., «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*., p. 610.

29 Regarding Delbrück's creative approach to rankism, which he treated without dogmatism: Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, *cit*., p. 185.

"real history" rather than an integral part of it.[30]

Delbrück's military service reflected his attitude toward the state. He was not attracted to garrison life, nor was he interested in participating in further wars.[31] Perhaps his choice of career path explains why his approach to military history was unemotional, unlike the academic debates in which he participated. Many of his followers were unfulfilled soldiers who treated military history as a substitute for realizing their youthful dreams. They idealized the "general staff perspective," treating it as a form of secret knowledge to which they aspired. Delbrück knew what the military was like. As an academic lecturer, he consciously chose not to imitate attitudes that were effective in a different environment but irrelevant to the university's specific nature. He made his position clear relatively early on, as early as 1887.[32]

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, military history was widely perceived as a valuable source of material for staff analyses and officer training. The belief in its practical usefulness overshadowed research into the non-military aspects of conflicts. The domination of authors from the military led to the illusion of the universality of the principles of war, as if its individual elements were not linked to the organizational and technical capabilities of specific armies and the cultures of both one's own army and the enemy army. Delbrück acknowledged the value of practical experience and knowledge in addressing military matters,[33] but in his view, they cannot substitute for rigorous academic analysis of primary sources.[34] An excerpt from his correspondence with General Sigismund von Schlichting is helpful to understanding Delbrück's way of thinking. After the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* was published, the general expressed his appreciation to the author. He also hoped that amateurism among civilian authors would decrease thanks to reading Delbrück's book. In the preface to the second edition, Delbrück humorously and without negativity responded to Schlichting. He referred to the general's statement by

30 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., p. 321.

31 Axel von Harnack, «Hans Delbrück als Historiker und Politiker,» *Neue Rundschau*, 63, 1952, p. 409.

32 Hans Delbrück, «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*.

33 *Ibid*., p. 611; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LI–LII.

34 Id., «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*., p. 611; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LII–LIII, LV.

expressing a similar wish with regard to officers.[35]

For the Berlin historian, the only goals an academic military researcher should have are general cognitive research goals. As a consequence, the practice-oriented "general staff perspective" and the expectations formulated by state institutions other than universities must be rejected. Furthermore, Delbrück opposed reproducing the literary image of war, which is based on oversimplified categorization and emotional stimulation. He adhered to objectivity in the spirit of Ranke, who believed in the possibility of achieving rational knowledge of human behavior.[36]

In Delbrück's case, Hegelianism, rationalism, and rejecting the influence of Providence on history were closely linked to the intellectual influence of Friedrich A. Lange (1828–1875).[37] Lange's book led the "father of military history" to adopt a materialistic view in his youth, which he later incorporated into his historical work.[38]

The creation of a new historical specialty, today called "military history" (*Militärgeschichte*), and, in Delbrück's time, "history of the art of war" (*Geschichte der Kriegskunst*) or "history of wars" (*Kriegsgeschichte*),[39] required the establishment of guidelines that would permanently challenge the monopoly of "historians in military uniforms."

First and foremost, Delbrück defined the purpose of academic military his-

35 *Ibid.*, p. XLVIII.

36 Richard H. Bauer, «Hans Delbrück (1848–1929),» *cit*., p. 104; Friedrich Meinecke, *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin*, *cit*., pp. 155–156; Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 135; Axel von Harnack, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., p. 421.

37 See Friedrich A. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, Baedeker, Leipzig 1866.

38 Arden Bucholz, «Introduction: Delbrück's Life and Work,» in Id. (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, p. 3. Generally about materialism in Delbrück's work: Friedrich Meinecke, *Strassburg/Freiburg/Berlin*, *cit*., pp. 155–156.

39 On the evolution of terminology in German historiography: Wolfgang von Groote, «Militärgeschichte,» *MZ*, 1, 1, 1967, pp. 5–19; Rainer Wohlfeil, «Wehr-, Kriegs- oder Militärgeschichte?,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 165–175; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik. Der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1914–1956*, Schöningh, Paderborn 2002, pp. 15–18.

tory as the understanding of the past, not finding practical solutions.[40] Theoretically, his view permitted a distinction between the creative activities of academic scholars and officers while respecting their differing principles. However, Delbrück's polemical temperament and disdain for the superiority often displayed by members of the military historical service resulted in a long-standing conflict.[41] He sought acceptance for the newly established specialty of military history and aimed to demonstrate the superiority of his approach. The conflict primarily stemmed from the parties' differing approaches to analyzing sources and the Rankean universal history project. Wounded ambitions and a belief in infallibility were also significant factors.

As a proponent of historicism, Delbrück favored contextualizing sources by placing them within their appropriate cultural frameworks. Instead of attributing a universal view of the past, he emphasized the variability in this regard. Delbrück's understanding of historicism mitigated the risk of making ahistorical interpretations. In contrast, most "historians in military uniforms" treated sources as a simple reflection of past reality. They failed to recognize the widespread use of borrowings, topoi, and narrative schemes. For example, if a medieval chronicler accused pagan peoples of cruelty, it did not necessarily mean his encountering with its manifestations. Rather, it was simply a widely accepted way to portray pagans. On the battlefield, misunderstanding the context in which a historical work was created could have disastrous consequences if a commander blindly copied patterns inherited from predecessors. Delbrück's attitude toward the lack of proper source criticism in the treatment of history is evident in his description of Niccolò Machiavelli's (1469–1527) failed military reforms.[42]

The Berlin professor shifted his focus from factual reporting to narrative analysis, drawing on the strong philological foundation he developed during his studies.[43] His competencies regarding sources enabled him to challenge the common belief in the credibility of certain historians and demonstrate modern

40 Hans Delbrück, «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*., pp. 610–611; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LI–LII; *ibid*., 4, [p. IX].

41 See Chapter 4.

42 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 131–148.

43 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 172–173; Andreas Hillgruber, «Hans Delbrück,» *cit*., pp. 44–45; Arden Bucholz, «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *cit.*, pp. 518–519, 521

authors' ability to describe the course of events more multifacetedly and objectively than contemporaries could. First, he demonstrated the extensive conventionalization of the sources used. This brought the neglected philological method into the spotlight, exposing Delbrück to endless interpretive disputes with philologists.

For Delbrück, humans are both the creators of and the subjects of culture, which must influence human actions, including how armed forces function in times of conflict and peace. Reviving the glory of the Roman legions requires more than recreating their organizational structure and weaponry; it also requires an appropriate sociocultural environment influencing perceptions of killing, attitudes toward military service, and soldiers' position in the political system. Consequently, military art can be treated as a product of culture because it combines the intellectual traditions of a period with solutions limited by the available resources and scope. Recognizing these dependencies led Delbrück to accept military history as part of cultural history toward the end of his life.[44] His opinion did not contradict his previously expressed belief in the paramount role of the state—Delbrück believed that only it could give a community inhabiting a specific area a universal dimension of culture.[45]

To distinguish between the two groups of military authors, Delbrück proposed categorizing them as either "military historians" and "military critics" (*Militärkritiker*) or "military writers" (*Militärschriftsteller*). The former were to study history based on academic standards, while the latter were to draw inspiration from history to develop new concepts for war.[46] The division he proposed was ultimately not adopted in historiography, but Delbrück denied officers the right to call themselves "historians" simply because they dealt with historical sources. Considering the times in which he lived, his stance was openly confrontational. It would be surprising if it were not based on his negative experiences in debates with adversaries from the army's ranks.

Delbrück interpreted Ranke's universalism broadly, considering it not only chronologically and geographically, but also in other ways. He believed that a

44 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., p. 12; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. IX].

45 Id., *Weltgeschichte*, 1, *cit*., pp. 15–17.

46 This division first appeared in a 1887 paper: Id., «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*. More on Delbrück's distinction: Peter Paret, «Hans Delbrück on Military Critics and Military Historians,» *MA*, 30, 3, 1966, pp. 148–152.

true understanding of history could only be achieved by combining different research perspectives often associated with specific historical specialties. He attempted to move beyond Ranke's preferred political history by incorporating social, economic, and cultural perspectives to the fullest extent possible. His idea is evident in the second and third volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, in which the politics of individual communities are sometimes a result of internal social relationships.[47] Delbrück's approach posed an insurmountable barrier for most military historians, partly due to their education and partly due to institutional needs. From the outset, therefore, Delbrück exposed himself to accusations of setting arbitrary standards for the entire community. Regardless of objections' validity, his work was bound to provoke outrage among officers who had participated in recent wars and published numerous historical works on military matters. General Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849–1930), one of the leaders of the opposition against Delbrück's "heretical" aspirations, frequently wrote about the officers' indignation in his memoirs.[48]

Given the officer corps' reaction, Delbrück's actions were aimed at doing more than just introducing military history to universities. Previously, it had been treated as an area reserved for professional officers. The possible consequences of spreading Delbrück's ideas went beyond merely questioning the privileged position of the military historical service. The stakes were much higher: recognizing that, from a historical perspective, human military activity is subject to logical understanding using the same cognitive tools as other spheres of life, and it is achieved through academic methods of source analysis, including the broader sociocultural context. In today's era of non-anthropocentric history and cognitive science, such a statement may seem obvious or even banal. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, the dominant approach among military researchers was based on simple evolutionism stemming from the belief in the primacy of effectiveness. Although it would be several decades before the history of mentality became mainstream in historiography, Delbrück was the first to recognize more than a purely rational search for methods of killing opponents.

47 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 2, *Die Germanen*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017; *ibid*., 3, *Das Mittelalter*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Hamburg 2017.

48 Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1927, pp. 126, 133.

Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886).

Delbrück's belief in Rankean objectivity did not generate any contradictions, because it does not assume the existence of a fixed, unchanging image of history, which a historian could simply extract from the sources.[49] Otherwise, a limited number of well-prepared studies would suffice, calling into question the point of further studying history. Translating the famous Rankean phrase "*Wie es eigentlich gewesen*" as "How it actually was" rather than "How it really was" shifts the focus to skillfully establishing the historical context of the narrative.[50] Such an understanding of Rankean objectivity fully aligns with Delbrück's approach of contextualizing sources and viewing their components—like Ranke—in terms of facts, which could lead to the objectification of conclusions.

Delbrück described his approach to researching military history as *Sachkritik*, which may be translated as "factual criticism." He uniquely combined the traditional philological method with the analysis of quantifiable data (demographic, economic, and technical) and extra-source knowledge derived from field observations and military experience.[51] *Sachkritik* enabled Delbrück to understand the impact of morale and unit cohesion on combat effectiveness, among other things.[52] Emphasizing the importance of rationality in a historian's work, Delbrück considered source criticism to be impossible without *Sachkritik*, as *Sachkritik* requires the ability to use logical reasoning and expert knowledge.[53] However, defining "expert knowledge" was difficult or even impossible, which introduced an element of far-reaching arbitrariness into Delbrück's vision. Nevertheless, the usefulness of knowledge of human limitations for the correct reconstruction of tactics is hard to deny.[54]

The philological method has been used in universities for years without controversy. Attempting to utilize measurable data was something different because

49 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LVI.

50 Leopold Ranke, *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1535*, 1, Reimer, Leipzig–Berlin 1824, p. 7.

51 Hans Delbrück, «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*., pp. 610–611; Id., *Numbers in History*, University of London Press, London 1913, pp. 8–11; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LII–LIII.

52 Id., «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» in Arden Bucholz (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, p. 49.

53 Id., *Die Strategie des Perikles*, *cit*., p. III.

54 Id., «Triarier und Leichtbewaffnete,» *HZ*, 60, 2, 1888, pp. 238–239; Id., «Theologische Philologie,» *PJ*, 116, 1904, pp. 210–212.

it required skills that were often unfamiliar to humanities scholars. Delbrück openly acknowledged being inspired by Karl J. Beloch (1854–1929),[55] one of the first historians to enthusiastically embrace *Sachkritik*.[56] Beloch specialized in the demography of the ancient world. Although his findings were repeatedly criticized, they still serve as fundamental references for authors focused on ancient social history.[57] Clearly, Delbrück had no intention of abandoning traditional historiography. Theodor Mommsen remained his main role model as a narrative historian for years.[58]

Delbrück found demographic studies useful for determining the mobilization potential of different states, which led to verifying the number of combatants. His conclusions often challenged the credibility of the historians who were essential to shaping European civilization. Consequently, their work was not always examined with the necessary critical distance. Delbrück considered verifying numerical data to be one of his greatest achievements in military history.[59] His research attracted international attention, as evidenced by an invitation from the University of London authorities to deliver a series of guest lectures in 1913.[60]

The first and most spectacular example of the effectiveness of the demographic aspect of *Sachkritik* was determining the mobilization potential of Athens and Persia in the fifth century BCE. Delbrück's calculations differed so greatly from those of Herodotus of Halicarnassus (the 80s–20s of the fifth

55 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LV; *ibid*., 4, [p. X].

56 [Karl J.] Beloch, rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. Von Hans Delbrück. 2. Teil. 1. Hälfte. *Römer und Germanen*. Berlin, Georg Stilke. 1901. 231 S., *HZ*, 89, 1, 1902, pp. 75–76; Id., rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. Von Hans Delbrück. Zweiter Teil – zweite Hälfte. *Völkerwanderung*. Übergang ins Mittelalter. Berlin, Georg Stilke. 1902, *HZ*, 91, 3, 1903, pp. 498–499; Id., rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. Von Hans Delbrück. I. Teil. *Das Altertum*. 2. neu durchgearbeitete und vervollständigte Auflage. Berlin, Georg Stilke. 1908. XIV u. 608 S., *HZ*, 104, 2, 1910, pp. 344–346.

57 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 256–261; Stefan Rebenich, «Beloch, Karl Julius,» in Peter Kuhlmann, Helmuth Schneider (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly*, Suppl. 6, *History of Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2014, p. 35.

58 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LV.

59 Id., *Geist und Masse in der Geschichte. Rede zur Feier des Geburtstages Seiner Majestät des Kaisers und Königs, gehalten in der Aula der Königl. Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin am 27. Januar 1912*, Stilke, Berlin 1912, p. 4; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. XLIX, LV–LVI.

60 Id., *Numbers in History*, *cit*.

century BCE) that they invalidated all previous academic works on the subject. Delbrück revisited the problem of the size of the Greek and Persian armies several times, refining his conclusions each iteration.[61] By relying primarily on settlement structure and logistical capabilities, he definitively debunked the notion of million-strong armies participating in ancient wars. Beloch's works proved very helpful to Delbrück, though he did not take an uncritical attitude toward them. He did not hesitate to correct Beloch's theses on several occasions, always doing so with the full respect due to a great predecessor.[62]

Despite the initial outrage caused by his questioning of established beliefs, Delbrück was completely successful; the reductionism he employed became a permanent fixture in historiography. Today, it is difficult to find a scholar who emphasizes the enormous size of the armies fielded by ancient Mediterranean states. The "father of military history" verified the remaining data in ancient and medieval sources, summarizing his findings in the first three volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*. Regarding the modern era, he was unable to achieve a similar breakthrough due to his adoption of a conservative narrative form and his use of documents whose content required critical reading but was generally closer to reality than narrative sources. Ranke acknowledged their absolute superiority over other forms of writing.[63] Delbrück's work lacks such a clear-cut approach. He treated documents as a type of source that was complementary to others—simply more useful to the historian in some cases.

Interestingly, Delbrück showed little interest in armament parameters. Instead, he relied on the findings of authors specializing in military technology. He particularly valued the work of Lieutenant Colonel Max Jähns (1837–1900),[64] despite Jähns' membership in the Prussian officer corps.[65] Delbrück undoubtedly recognized its importance, as evidenced by his inclusion of related topics in his studies. He either felt unqualified to develop his own interpretations or

61 Id., *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege. Zwei combinierte kriegsgeschichtliche Studien*, Walther & Apolant, Berlin 1887, pp. 121–147, 309–314; Id., *Numbers in History*, *cit*., pp. 22–32; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 7–33.

62 E.g., *ibid*., pp. 15–16, 24, 103.

63 Leopold Ranke, *Geschichte der romanischen*, *cit*., pp. VI–VIII.

64 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. IX]. Jähns is one of the most frequently cited authors in the fourth volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*.

65 On the personality and legacy of Jähns: Robert H. Larson, «Max Jähns and the Writing of Military History in Imperial Germany,» *JMH*, 72, 2, 2008, pp. 345–370.

considered it impossible to make a breakthrough in the field of weaponry. According to Delbrück, while weapons are essential in war, the human factor determines its outcome.[66] His emphasis on the importance of the human factor was, to some extent, a result of his experiences in the Franco-Prussian War, during which he encountered a wide range of attitudes toward the enemy.[67] This may explain why he found the study of military thought more valuable.[68]

Delbrück's work only marginally reflected the development of military technology, not only in the case of armament. The only exception was warships, which he needed to understand in order to correctly reconstruct the course of naval battles. Even then, he was more interested in the tactical deployment of naval units than in the technical aspects.[69] He also did not pay much attention to defensive architecture.

Delbrück's approach to the influence of economic issues on the organization of armed forces, not just military logistics, was innovative. Franz Mehring (1846–1919), one of the leading German Marxist thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sarcastically noted in a series of reviews of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* that Delbrück's professed anti-Marxism contradicted his historical perspective, which remained in the spirit of the Marxist tradition.[70] Delbrück openly debated Mehring's political and historiographical views, treating him with respect and a certain degree of sympathy.[71] Delbrück indeed was one of the few authors who appreciated the importance of economic themes from the beginning. Even today, many scholars are more interested in confirming their own ideas about the anachronism of the historiography of Imperial

66 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. 232.

67 Id., «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» *cit*., pp. 45–49.

68 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 167–184; *ibid*., 3, pp. 739–755; *ibid*., 4, pp. 131–148, 590–600.

69 *Ibid*., 1, pp. 93–107. Delbrück's preferences resulted in the omission of battles such as Actium (31 BCE), Lepanto (1571), and Trafalgar (1805). Sieges, on the other hand, appeared on the margins of other discussions, not constituting a separate subject of analysis.

70 Franz Mehring, «Eine Geschichte der Kriegskunst,» in Id, *Zur Kriegsgeschichte und Militärfrage*, ed. Thomas Höhle, Hans Koch, Josef Schleifstein, Gesammelte Schriften, 8, Dietz, Berlin 1967, pp. 135–137. According to Mehring, not only Delbrück's work should be studied by Marxists, but also his life path: Arthur Rosenberg, «Hans Delbrück. Der Kritiker der Kriegsgeschichte,» *Die Gesellschaft*, 6, 2, 1929, pp. 245, 252. Highlighting the importance of economic conditions in Delbrück's work: *ibid*., pp. 247–248.

71 Hans Delbrück, *Regierung und Volkswille*, *cit*., pp. 59–62.

Germany than in the actual content of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* and Delbrück's other publications. Thus, non-military themes in his studies often escape their attention.

Mehring could also speak approvingly of Delbrück's publications because the Berlin professor was interested in the social basis of armies and its influence on the adopted model of military organization. Delbrück began lecturing on the social background of warfare as early as 1882–1883.[72] In 1887, he first attempted a broader description of the topic, using the Athenian, Burgundian, and Swiss armies as examples.[73] He successfully continued his socio-military studies in subsequent years. The fourth volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* differs from previous volumes due to its limitation of themes from the field of social history. During this period, Delbrück was preoccupied with writing commentaries on the current political and military events of the Great War. Until 1914, Delbrück's work was characterized by an emphasis on socio-economic aspects, which gradually gave way to a more conventional approach.

Though the proposal to conduct field studies caused little controversy, it was still easy to spark debate. Incorporating natural landscape changes and human impact into the research required shifting from a "general staff perspective" to include studies of cartography, land estate plans, and personal site visits. Effective implementation of Delbrück's assumptions was a significant step toward showing military researchers the relativity of the knowledge of past authors about the locations of the battles they described, often relying on literary conventions borrowed from their predecessors instead. In such cases, the armed confrontation may have occurred in a location and setting entirely different from what the reports suggest. According to Delbrück, medieval sources were particularly susceptible to distortion.[74]

Delbrück embarked on his first historical-military journey in 1878. He traveled to the battlefield of Waterloo (1815).[75] His role as tutor to Prince Waldemar until 1879 made traveling around Europe easier for him. In later years, it was more convenient for him to visit battlefields in Germany and neighboring countries. He made important discoveries, including information about the course of

72 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LIV–LV.

73 Id., *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege*, *cit*.

74 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 3, *cit*., pp. 282, 314, 342.

75 Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 22.

the battle (or rather, the series of battles) in the Teutoburg Forest.[76] In his analysis of the battle, he wrote that the first stage of research should determine the weaponry and tactics used by each side. The second stage should then compare these findings with the possibilities dictated by natural conditions. He cited his description of the Battle of Marathon (490 BCE) as the first example of *Sachkritik* successfully applied based on field studies.[77]

The risky aspect of *Sachkritik* was elevating conclusions drawn from individual experiences as one of the main foundations of historical argumentation. Although studying maps and conducting personal site visits are within the framework of verifiable knowledge, impressions gained from one's own experiences are difficult to consider universal. Paradoxically, an author's advantage may lie in abandoning strict adherence to sources in favor of enriching the interpretive context with elements beyond the scope of the philological method. For example, someone who has not experienced functioning in a closed, hierarchical environment will have difficulty grasping the basic conditions of military life. Similarly, he/she will have difficulty grasping physical aggression, the sight of blood, the exertion of marching, the soreness of muscles resulting from the prolonged use of melee weapons, and the spread of panic. Today, a lack of knowledge about the specifics of military craftsmanship is evident in naïve battle descriptions inspired by popular culture, which fail to account for the physical and psychological limitations of combatants.[78]

Drawing from a general understanding of human limitations and nineteenth-century Prussian warfare, Delbrück effectively explained the rationale behind the ancient Greeks' use of specific formations.[79] Even more puzzling was his solution to the problem of intervals and the method of rotation within the Roman manipular formation.[80] However, the term he proposed, "manipular pha-

76 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 2, *cit*., pp. 68–103.

77 *Ibid*., p. 78.

78 Fortunately, in the 1980s, a realistic trend emerged in cinema, whose creators focus on depicting the most realistic combat conditions possible: Michał N. Faszcza, «Cztery drogi, jeden cel. „Nowa historia wojskowości" i formy jej propagowania,» in Krzysztof Garczewski, Anna Garczewska (ed.), *Narracje historyczne we współczesnym świecie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2021, pp. 293–294.

79 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 159, 168.

80 *Ibid*., pp. 311–323. Previous studies on this topic: Id., «Die römische Manipulartaktik,» *HZ*, 51, 2, 1883, pp. 239–264; Id., *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege*, *cit*., pp. 269–308.

lanx" (*Manipular-Phalanx*), was unanimously rejected. *Sachkritik* never meant complete freedom of interpretation. Rather, it was based on an assessment of the possibility of applying analogies in light of fundamental knowledge about human behavior and corporeality. Currently, military history research successfully utilizes psychology, sociology, and cultural anthropology, yet these fields are based on contemporary observation rather than the analysis of sources from previous eras.[81]

Delbrück's approach was criticized because it challenged the existing methods used by academics and military officers. Initially, scholars tried to adhere to the philological method, treating the world presented in the source as internally consistent and narratively complete. Introducing elements not introduced by the author was considered unacceptable. Officers, on the other hand, subordinated the source material to their preconceived assumptions. His attitude often manifested as disregarding the historical context and reducing any issues to present-day specifics. The ideal solution would be to combine academic education with military experience. In this regard, Jähns could enjoy the status of a pioneer. However, Delbrück's opponents humorously presented him as the only person who met Delbrück's criteria for a military historian.[82]

In reality, despite his participation in the Franco-Prussian War, Delbrück's military experience was limited. While military service provided him an opportunity to become familiar with organizational matters and tactical basics, as well as observe soldiers' emotions during combat, he never commanded large groups of soldiers or engaged in staff work. He did not develop a war strategy or doctrine. His arguments about how command was exercised and how war was planned were based solely on source analysis, similar to historians who reject *Sachkritik*. Presenting oneself as an expert does not necessarily provide convincing justification but could elicit negative emotions.

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81 See Chapter 6. The application of the social sciences requires great caution due to factors such as technological progress and its impact on people's lives. Delbrück personally experienced bayonet combat, providing insight into the conditions of using edged weapons. See [Charles] Ardant du Picq, *Études sur le combat,* Hachette, Paris, 1880, pp. 11–19, 67–74, 88–109. Such instances are now extremely rare in European armies. Experimental archaeology allows us to overcome these limitations to some extent, but we should not absolutize the conclusions drawn from it.

82 Roel Konijnendijk, *Between Miltiades and Moltke: Early German Studies in Greek Military History*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2022, pp. 77–78.

Delbrück's approach to military practice was intended to distinguish him from figures like Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff viewed war as a politico-spiritual phenomenon and soldiers as a mindless collective destined to follow orders blindly. In his scholarly work, Delbrück relied on solid source analysis supported by logical reasoning. His military experience led him to draw concrete conclusions about the importance of recognizing human limitations and overcoming them through the selection of specific tactics, a disciplinary system, weaponry, and methods of boosting morale. According to Delbrück's approach, units are collections of people, not mere tokens moved on a map at the commander's whim.

To strengthen his authority among the polemists, Delbrück cited high-ranking officers as his interlocutors and, by extension, his consultants. He mentioned the following among them: Crown Prince Friedrich, Field Marshal Leonhard von Blumenthal, Generals Walter von Gottberg (1823–1885), Hugo von Winterfeld (1836–1898), Albert von Mischke (1830–1906), Thaddäus von Unruh (1834–1907), Eduard von Fransecky (1807–1890), and Heinrich von Geissler (1833–1898), as well as Colonel Eugen von Dresky (1831–1892) and Major Bernhard Boie (1839–1896).[83] As the near future showed, Delbrück's personal connections did not make much of an impression on his polemicists. A new generation of officers had emerged in the Great General Staff, confident in their better understanding of the challenges posed by the new times. In addition to Delbrück's neorankism and political views, many officers saw him as a representative of an inevitably passing world.

His relationships with scholars were different. Since most of them had no direct experience with the war, he often had to explain basic military concepts. The lack of knowledge among polemicists on even basic topics sometimes caused him frustration and a feeling of alienation, exacerbated by attacks not always being merit-based. A similar phenomenon is described by Erich M. Remarque (1898–1970) in his novel *Im Westen nichts Neues*.[84] The romantic yet false apology for war proclaimed by the high school professor gradually gives way to a depiction of the social alienation of World War I veterans embittered by the childish patriotism displayed on the home front. Delbrück found it as

83 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIV.

84 Erich M. Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, Propyläen, Berlin 1929.

difficult to make polemicists understand the reality of killing as he did to explain the impact of a foot soldier's marching load on their ability to fight. In such circumstances, it was easy to portray the Berlin professor as eccentric, yet the characters in Remarque's book were also considered eccentric by civilians susceptible to propaganda slogans.

Delbrück's tendency to use comparative methods was problematic, although it is now recognized as a significant element of his historical methodology and a source of valuable insights.[85] The main problem was the lack of adequate introductions justifying the selection of specific examples. Without them, his work could be accused of forcing conclusions to fit a preconceived thesis and manipulating the argument to confirm it. Reality was less complex. Delbrück simply assumed that the correctness of an analogy was determined by the conclusions drawn from the argument rather than by elaborate theoretical introductions.[86]

Both books are important works in Delbrück's body of work and are written in a comparative style.[87] Over time, his tendency to move away from the comparative method became apparent. Delbrück did not change his position; he continued to defend the validity of the analogies he used until 1913.[88] Rather, the evolution of his historical writing can be attributed to the exhaustion of the formula he used to develop the partial issues incorporated into the first three volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*. Most of Delbrück's methodological experiments occurred by 1901, when the second and third volumes of his *magnum opus* were published. Taking a professorship at the University of Berlin in 1895 may have influenced him to conform to prevailing lecturing conventions.

Some of the analogies used by Delbrück can easily be questioned on a detailed level, but he considered details to be secondary. His main goal was to demonstrate the overall direction of changes occurring during the described period. Therefore, capturing certain trends from an evolutionary perspective was

85 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 174–175; Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *Armed Forces & Society*, 7, 2, 1981, p. 309; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, pp. 326–353; Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion,» *cit*., pp. XXVI, XXXIII, XLII. Justification for using analogy as a research method: Hans Delbrück, «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *cit*., p. 611.

86 Id., *Numbers in History*, *cit*., pp. 5–7.

87 Id., *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege*, *cit*.; Id., *Die Strategie des Perikles*, *cit*.

88 Id., *Numbers in History*, *cit*., pp. 5–6.

more important to him.[89] He did not attempt to develop a comprehensive theory of the relationship between politics, war, or society. Instead, he focused on illustrating the context of events and processes. This made his research on the reception of antiquity during the Renaissance particularly noteworthy. It demonstrated the cyclical nature of some concepts and the importance of the sociocultural environment in determining their effective implementation.[90] Reading his works reveals a conclusion often overlooked by military historians: resorting to historical solutions requires an understanding of the time's specific characteristics rather than superficial similarities arising from weapon type (e.g., infantry, cavalry, or artillery) or fortified strongholds' significance.

It is impossible to ignore the influence of Delbrück's political views on the topics he chose to address. The unifying idea of the four volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* is the desire to understand the historical conditions enabling the emergence of citizen-soldiers in the modern nation-state. In other words, Delbrück attempted to describe the birth of the political subject on the battlefield.[91] The focus of his research explains why he focused on Athens rather than Sparta, the Roman Republic rather than the Roman Empire, and the Swiss cantons rather than the Spanish maritime empire. Therefore, his original intention to conclude the tetralogy with the victorious wars of Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder seems fully justified.[92] For Delbrück, the Act of German Unification, proclaimed in 1871, was the culmination of a process that began with the Battle of Marathon.

One might wonder how much it determined his perception of knighthood. He portrayed knights as an unruly and difficult-to-control force whose battlefield dominance was simply a result of their privileged social status.[93] The emergence of well-organized, adequately armed peasant infantry exposed the weaknesses of knights without the need for firearms.[94] Did Delbrück subconsciously equate knighthood with the Prussian social elite of his time, who opposed the general

89 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 180–181; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» *cit*., p. 331; Arden Bucholz, «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *cit*., pp. 519–520.

90 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., pp. 3–27, 67–91, 131–148.

91 Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion,» *cit*., p. XL.

92 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [pp. IX–X].

93 *Ibid*., 3, pp. 304–362.

94 *Ibid*., pp. 629–738.

populace's political participation? By emphasizing the peasantry's advantage, was he suggesting that a state's military strength depends on its citizens' willingness to defend their homeland? One might refer to the Prussian Reorganization Commission of 1807, whose results were closely linked to the empowerment of subjects through the partial implementation of the concept of a "people under arms."[95]

Therefore, understanding Delbrück's attitude toward the relationship between politics and military service is key to grasping his historiographical perspective. As early as 1870, he mentioned the advantage of a citizen army for the first time.[96] He did not finish the fifth volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, which might have revealed his personal feelings and shed additional light on his understanding of certain phenomena. Most importantly, however, the phrase "framework of political history" (*Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*) in the title of his most important work hints at his evolutionary view of military history.

Despite his stated pursuit of objectivity, Delbrück cannot be entirely free of subjectivity. The first manifestation of his political views was the periodization adopted in *Weltgeschichte*, which was influenced by the Prussian Historical School. The second manifestation was the shift in emphasis in *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*. These are further examples of Benedetto Croce's (1866–1952) correct observation about the rootedness of each author in the times in which he lived and created. Through their historiographical work, authors reproduce their own worldview to some extent.[97] Delbrück's work supported Ranke's project of universal history and, at the same time, commented on the significance of idealism in historical writing. Such aspects underscore the importance of reading Delbrück's works in the context of his era, as the Berlin professor did with his sources.

95 *Ibid*., 4, pp. 590–600.

96 Id., «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» *cit*., p. 49.

97 Benedetto Croce, *Teoria e storia della storiografia*, 9. ed., Laterza, Bari 1966, pp. 46, 51–52. The first edition of the referenced book was published in 1917. This information allows us to place Croce's views in their proper chronological context, given his close link to the evolution of German historiography.

Chapter 3

The influence of Carl von Clausewitz

General Carl von Clausewitz's work clearly influenced Hans Delbrück's academic activity, shaping his views on military matters and the issues he addressed. Delbrück's differing interpretation of the Prussian general's thoughts sparked a years-long dispute between him and representatives of the German military historical service.[1] Thus, it is worthwhile to examine the similarities and differences in Clausewitz's and Delbrück's views, as their connection went far beyond the superficial references to the Prussian military classic, popular at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The date of Delbrück's first encounter with Clausewitz's writings is unknown. The Prussian general's literary achievements include the unfinished work *Vom Kriege*, published posthumously in 1832, as well as a series of short studies dedicated to individual campaigns, mostly from the years 1796–1815. Delbrück did not mention when he became interested in Clausewitz's concepts in any of the prefaces included in his studies, even though he often used them to provide interpretative context for his own work. He also omitted this information from the speech he gave for his seventieth birthday.[2] Therefore, historians must independently seek answers to questions concerning the connections between Clausewitz and Delbrück, using fragmentary information.

An intellectual connection between them could have been established under the influence of the Prussian Army's victories in the wars against Denmark (1864), Austria (1866), and France (1870–1871), led by Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder. Moltke at least declaratively increased interest in Clause-

1 See Chapter 4.

2 Hans Delbrück, «Danksagung,» *PJ*, 174, 1918, pp. 442–445.

witz's ideas,[3] and Delbrück served under his command during the war against France. Furthermore, during military maneuvers in Wittenberg in 1874, Delbrück read a book by Colonel Wilhelm Rüstow.[4] However, Rüstow's views were more aligned with those of General Antoine H. Jomini (1779–1869; de Jomini from 1808),[5] which calls into question Rüstow's possible influence on Delbrück's interest in Clausewitz's work. Another clue is Delbrück's acceptance of the 1877 proposal to finish the biography of Field Marshal Neidhardt von Gneisenau, started by Georg H. Pertz but left unfinished upon his death.[6]

Clausewitz's close ties with Gneisenau are well known. They likely met in 1802 when Clausewitz joined the Military Society (Militärische Gesellschaft), which was founded the previous year and brought together officers interested in discussing changes to the art of war.[7] From 1809 to 1811, Clausewitz and Gneisenau worked together to prepare a plan for a popular uprising in the event of a French invasion. Clausewitz also lectured on the plan at the General War School (Allgemeine Kriegsschule) in Berlin from 1810 to 1811.[8] From 1813 to 1818, Clausewitz was Gneisenau's protégé in the army. In 1830, at Gneisenau's request, Clausewitz became chief of staff of the Observation Army (Observa-

3 See pp. 134–135.

4 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. LIII.

5 John Shy, «Jomini,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 178; Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought: from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989, p. 129.

6 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIII.

7 Some authors suggest that Clausewitz only met Gneisenau in 1808 when Gneisenau officially joined the reform movement: Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State: The Man, His Theories, and His Times*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1976, p. 98; Hew Strachan, *Carl von Clausewitz's* On War*: A Biography*, Grove Press, New York 2007, p. 50. Although the first confirmed information about their acquaintance dates back to this year, it would be strange if they had not met during the Military Society meetings.

8 On Clausewitz's views on irregular actions and "small war" (*kleiner Krieg*): Werner Hahlweg, *Preußische Reformzeit und revolutionärer Krieg*, Mittler, Berlin 1962, pp. 35–44; Id., «Clausewitz and Guerilla Warfare,» *JSS*, 9, 2–3, 1986, pp. 127–133; Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, *cit*., pp. 188–191; Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz*, Pimlico, London 2002, pp. 133–138; Id., «Small Wars in the Age of Clausewitz: The Watershed Between Partisan War and People's War,» *JSS*, 33, 1, 2010, pp. 139–162; Jacek Jędrysiak, «„Mała wojna" w pruskiej myśli wojskowej 1815–1848,» *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Oficerskiej Wojsk Lądowych*, 3, 173, 2014, pp. 35–38.

tionsarmee, Beobachtungsarmee), which was stationed on the borders of the Russian partition of Poland in connection with the outbreak of the Polish November Uprising (1830–1831). Gneisenau himself commanded the army and was promoted to field marshal in 1825.[9] Thus, the period during which Delbrück had regular contact with Clausewitz's biographic records was the years following the continuation of Pertz's work.

These circumstances coincided with Delbrück receiving an offer in 1874 to tutor Prince Waldemar. Following the prince's premature death in 1879, Delbrück left the imperial court to focus entirely on academia. He vaguely indicated the years 1874–1879 as the period when he began his in-depth studies of Clausewitz's writings.[10] The information he provided is corroborated by the date of publication of his first article about the Prussian general (1878).[11]

Delbrück mentioned Crown Prince Friedrich's efforts to draw his attention to the importance of Clausewitz's ideas.[12] While at the royal court, Delbrück had the opportunity to discuss his interpretations with Friedrich and General Leonhard von Blumenthal.[13] Both Friedrich and Blumenthal had participated in the Franco-Prussian War: Friedrich had commanded the Third Army, and Blumenthal had served as his chief of staff. They both also left behind diaries documenting their experiences in the recent conflict.[14] However, neither referred to

9 On Clausewitz's relationship with Gneisenau: Roger Parkinson, *Clausewitz: A Biography*, Cooper Square, London 1970, pp. 105–107, 124, 129, 284, 321–325; Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform 1807–1815*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1966, pp. 125, 156–157; Id., *Clausewitz and the State*, *cit*., pp. 61, 98, 141, 183, 187–188, 214–215, 232, 238–240, 256–266, 315–322, 410–430; Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1986, pp. 15, 28, 31, 38, 40, 104; Hew Strachan, *Carl von Clausewitz's* On War, *cit*., pp. 52–53, 55, 57, 60, 62–63, 66–67; Donald Stoker, *Clausewitz: His Life and Work*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, pp. 77–78, 80, 87–88, 96–97, 105, 152–154, 166–167, 254–256, 278–280.

10 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*. p. LIV.

11 Id., «Clausewitz,» *ZpGL*, 15, 1878, pp. 217–231.

12 In 1887, after undergoing previous revisions and additions, it was republished. Cited reprint: Id., «General von Clausewitz,» in Hans Delbrück, Peter Paret, *Krieg, Geschichte, Theorie. Zwei Studien über Clausewitz*, ed. Peter Paret, Miles, Norderstedt 2018, pp. 21–40.

13 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIV.

14 Friedrich [III], *Kaiser Friedrichs Tagebücher über die Kriege 1866 und 1870–1871, sowie über seine Reisen nach dem Morgenlande und nach Spanien*, ed. Margarete von Poschinger, Schröder, Berlin 1902, pp. 101–138; [Leonhard] von Blumenthal, *Tagebücher des Generalfeldmarschalls Grafen Blumenthal aus den Jahren 1866 und 1870/1871*, ed. Albrecht von

General Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831).

Clausewitz or any other military theorist. Instead, they focused on describing the course of military operations.

Apparently, Delbrück became interested in Clausewitz's work between 1874, when he began working as a tutor and discussing the topic with the Crown Prince (possibly after reading Rüstow's book), and 1878, when his first article on Clausewitz was published.

Interestingly, Delbrück started studying military history after getting a job at the imperial court. His doctoral dissertation was purely source-based and did not contain any elements related to military issues. His decision to specialize in military history coincided with his assimilation of Clausewitz's concepts, which significantly influenced the evolution of his research approach. In the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, Delbrück emphasized the importance of studying *Vom Kriege* to fully comprehend Thucydides' (the 70s or 60s of the fifth century–c. 400s BCE) account of the Peloponnesian War[15]—it was an intellectual extravagance strongly neglected by his adversaries. Most scholars disapproved of associating Clausewitz's work with different eras so freely, partly because debating with Delbrück in the early years of his academic career always ended up being an exegesis of *Vom Kriege*. Without knowledge of Clausewitz's work, they naturally could not grasp the basis of the belief in its universality.[16]

The title of Delbrück's most important work was a unique form of homage to Clausewitz. The "framework of political history" (*Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*) contained within was a direct reference to Clausewitz's famous assertion that "war is the continuation of politics by other means,"[17] a phrase so often cited out of context.

Delbrück understood politics as the totality of public affairs centered on the state, which he considered to be the most fundamental form of social organiza-

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Blumenthal, Cotta, Stuttgart–Berlin 1902, pp. 59–284.

15 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 129, 134.

16 The problem was clearly presented by: Johannes Kromayer, «Wahre und falsche Sachkritik,» *HZ*, 95, 1, 1905, p. 7.

17 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, Nikol, Hamburg 2008 [1832], c. 1.1.23–24, pp. 45–47; c. 1.1.26, p. 48; c. 1.2, p. 53; c. 8.6b, pp. 726–730.

tion.[18] His broad perspective referring to the Greek understanding of politicalness has led to interpretive misunderstandings nowadays. Some modern authors reveal their unfamiliarity with *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* by stating the need to expand Delbrück's view beyond political history. In reality, the Berlin professor placed a strong emphasis on social and economic history. The evolution of the meaning of concepts has made his choice of title unclear in retrospect, especially since it no longer automatically evokes Clausewitz.

The political nature of war is linked to Clausewitz's triad of the legitimate government, the commander and army, and the people.[19] The people are significant not because of their subjectivity, which resulted in dangerous accusations of "Jacobinism" under Prussia's absolute monarchy, but because alleged national character determines the qualities of soldiers.[20] Combined with the mood of the people, the social composition of the army determines morale, which is essential to victory.[21] Although Delbrück did not frame the problem in such a simplified manner (which causes further misunderstandings of his ideas), an analysis of his work suggests his familiarity with the concept of a triad. In the context of military historiography at the time, including the actions of political and military authorities was not exceptional; however, introducing the social context was.[22] Clausewitz's influence on Delbrück's perspective may have been decisive be-

18 See pp. 91–92.

19 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 1.1.28, p. 49.

20 Id., «The Germans and the French,» in Id., *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 250–262; Id., *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 3.6, pp. 193–197. Delbrück denied the existence of such a cognitive category as "national character": Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte. Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Berlin 1896–1920*, 1, *Das Altertum (bis 300 n. Chr.)*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1924, p. 25.

21 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 3.4–5, pp. 187–192.

22 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1972, pp. 167–168, 175; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City 1985, p. XI; Id., «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *The Historian*, 55, 3, 1993, p. 519; Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare del mondo antico. Prospettive retrospettive*, Jovene, Napoli 2006, p. 183; Michael Howard, «Military history and the history of war,» in Williamson Murray, Richard H. Sinnreich (ed.), *The past as prologue: The importance of history in the military profession*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 16; Virgilio Ilari, «Storia delle battaglie tra storia militare e Histoire-Bataille,» *Rivista di studi militari*, 7, 2018, p. 251.

cause Clausewitz promoted the idea of war as a form of social activity.[23]

The emphasis on the role of the people in Clausewitz's thinking stemmed from Prussia's defeat in 1807 and the establishment of the Military Reorganization Commission (Militär-Reorganisationskommission), led by General Gerhard von Scharnhorst (1755–1813). The Commission initiated a series of reforms in the Prussian Army between 1807 and 1819. Under Scharnhorst's guidance, Clausewitz helped to create new regulations for the infantry and cavalry.[24] Scharnhorst's progressive political views strongly influenced the author of *Vom Kriege*,[25] who, like his commander, saw no possibility of returning to the Enlightenment system of army formation. Instead, they promoted the idea of a "nation in arms," which had been successful in Revolutionary France's wars. Adapted to Prussian specifics, this concept precisely served as the basis for establishing the Military Reorganization Commission.[26]

After difficult political battles in 1813, the reforms resulted in the creation of

23 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 2.3.3, pp. 117–118.

24 Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640–1945*, Oxford University Press, London–Oxford–New York 1955, pp. 38–65; Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military*, Meridian, New York 1959, pp. 130–143; Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army*, Pall Mall, London 1966, pp. 57–75; Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform*, *cit*., pp. 117–245; Id., *Clausewitz and the State*, *cit*., pp. 137–146; Id., «Conscription and the End of the *Ancient Régime* in France and Prussia,» in Id., *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 53–74; Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, 1, University of Miami Press, Coral Gables 1969, pp. 93–108; Walter M. Simon, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement, 1807–1819*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca–New York 1971, pp. 150–197; Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807–1945*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs 1977, pp. 20–28.

25 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., p. 16—introduction written by Clausewitz's wife, Marie von Clausewitz (1779–1836). See also the deeply respectful and grateful biographical essay on Scharnhorst: Id., «On the Life and Character of Scharnhorst,» in Id., *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 85–109. Characteristics of Clausewitz's relations with Scharnhorst in Delbrück's papers: Hans Delbrück, «Clausewitz,» *cit*., p. 220; Id., «General von Clausewitz,» *cit*., pp. 22–23.

26 Carl von Clausewitz, «On the Life and Character,» *cit*., p. 102. See also Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army*, *cit*., pp. 65–67; Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform*, *cit*., pp. 118–120, 127, 224; Walter M. Simon, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement*, *cit*., pp. 159–161; Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought*, *cit*., p. 163; Hew Strachan, *Carl von Clausewitz's* On War, *cit*., pp. 47–48; Donald Stoker, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 19–20.

Landwehr, among other things. The victorious war against France, which finally ended in 1815, proved the reforms' effectiveness. After Scharnhorst's death in 1813 and the subsequent removal of the threat to the stability of the Prussian monarchy, reactionaries who feared the spread of "Jacobinism" (the excessive political empowerment of common people) were emboldened. They began promoting a vision of victory achieved through the "Prussian spirit" inherited from Friedrich II. They also questioned the effectiveness of reforms based on external influences, presented as dangerous to the Prussian state and culture. As early as 1818, the battle for *Landwehr*'s existence began. Clausewitz actively participated in it, defending *Landwehr*'s legitimacy.[27] His articles angered influential men in the king's entourage, leading to Clausewitz's transfer to the reserves in the same year. In 1819, the reactionaries triumphed over the reformers. Although *Landwehr* was ultimately preserved, its military and political significance was minimized for several decades.[28]

Delbrück approved the reforms of the Military Reorganization Commission, viewing its actions as the source of Prussian successes in 1813–1815.[29] His view can be interpreted as an indirect political declaration because, although Delbrück considered himself a monarchist, the dispute over whether the war against Napoleon I Bonaparte (1769–1821) was dynastic or national was ongoing.[30]

27 Carl von Clausewitz, «On the German Federal Army,» in Id., *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 304–312; Id., «Our Military Institutions,» in Id., *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 313–328; Id., «On the Political Advantages and Disadvantages of the Prussian *Landwehr*,» in Id., *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 329–334.

28 Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, *cit*., pp. 65–81; Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army*, *cit*., pp. 77–81; Walter M. Simon, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement*, *cit*., pp. 163–228; Dennis E. Showalter, «The Prussian *Landwehr* and Its Critics,» *Central European History*, 4, 1, 1971, pp. 4–18, 27–32; Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, *cit*., pp. 255–271; Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War*, *cit*., pp. 37–43; Ute Frevert, «Citizen-Soldiers: General Conscription in the Nineteenth and Twentieth,» in Elisabeth Krimmer, Patricia A. Simpson (ed.), *Enlightened War: German Theories and Cultures of Warfare from Frederick the Great to Clausewitz*, Camden House, New York–Woodbridge 2011, pp. 224–228.

29 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, pp. 290–300.

30 Christopher Clark, «The Wars of Liberation in Prussian Memory: Reflections on the Memo-

General Gerhard von Scharnhorst (1755–1813).

As a member of parliament and a supporter of social reforms, Delbrück likely agreed with Clausewitz's perspective, which emphasized society's willingness to wage war, the influx of volunteers, patriotic appeals, and the positive reception of *Landwehr*. In his preferred model, the monarch represented the nation, embodying its honor and pride rather than being the sole arbiter of its subjects' bodies and minds.

Delbrück supported the system of general military conscription, perceiving it as an expression of the political agency of citizens. In his view, conscription demonstrated loyalty to both the monarchy and the homeland.[31] To illustrate the positive effects of society identifying with the goals of war, he examined the Swiss cantonal system of the Renaissance period, the military reforms of Prince Maurice of Orange (1567–1625), and the military reforms of Revolutionary France.[32] However, he was concerned about the influence of aggressive nationalism on the course of wars, as it could manifest as institutionalized cruelty based on uncontrollable emotions. He repeatedly expressed his anxiety through his political and journalistic activities. The experiences of World War I confirmed the validity of his fears. In 1921, he lamented the catastrophic consequences of the war on the evolution of responsible communal thinking.[33] Perhaps his views were influenced by his earlier conversations with the Crown Prince, who had warned against placing the army in the hands of a parliament full of contradictory and often extreme ideas.[34] Clausewitz did not have such experiences, and romantic nationalism seemed like an attractive intellectual movement to many opponents of absolutism in the early nineteenth century.

The second reference to Clausewitz in the title of Delbrück's main work is "*Kriegskunst*" ("the art of war"). In the first half of the nineteenth century,

rialization of War in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany,» *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, 3, 1996, pp. 550–554.

31 Hans Delbrück, *Regierung und Volkswille*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1914, pp. III–IV.

32 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., pp. 3, 200–201, 516–547.

33 Charles à Court Repington, *After the War; London–Paris–Rome–Athens–Prague–Vienna–Budapest–Bucharest–Berlin–Sofia–Coblenz–New York–Washington: A Diary*, Constable & Company Ltd., London 1922, pp. 262–263.

34 Hans Delbrück, «Persönliche Erinnerungen an Kaiser Friedrich und sein Haus,» *PJ*, 62, 1888, pp. 106–107, 108.

there was an ongoing debate about whether the way war is conducted should be defined as an "art" or a "science." Its course had far-reaching consequences because it was closely linked to the question of whether commandership could be learned or if certain character traits and an indefinable "something" were necessary to distinguish "great captains" from others. Figures such as Colonel D. Heinrich von Bülow (1757–1807),[35] Field Marshal Karl Ludwig (Habsburg; 1771–1847),[36] and Jomini[37] advocated for "military science," promoting the "geometrization" of strategy and tactics as if human actions could be expressed in mathematical terms. Clausewitz took the opposite stance, unequivocally supporting the term "the art of war"[38] and accepting the existence of great commanders whose abilities were inaccessible to others.[39] Clausewitz's view was undoubtedly influenced by the experiences of the Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815).

Clausewitz found it impossible to establish a coherent and comprehensive system of war.[40] The source of his conviction is the large number of variables contradictory to defied strict rules, including the spiritual aspects of war,[41] that

35 Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, *cit*., pp. 87–88; Robert R. Palmer, «Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bülow: From Dynastic to National War,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, pp. 114–119; Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought*, *cit*., pp. 79–94; Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010, p. 79.

36 Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought*, *cit*., pp. 95–105; Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, *cit*., pp. 6, 155.

37 Michael Howard, «Jomini and the Classical Tradition in Military Thought,» in Id. (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of War*, Cassell, Bloomington 1965, pp. 3–20; John Shy, «Jomini,» *cit*., pp. 143–185; Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought*, *cit*., pp. 106–135; Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, *cit*., pp. 13–14, 18, 104–106; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Jomini, Modern War, and Strategy: The Triumph of the Essential,» in Hal Brands (ed.), *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2023, pp. 145–168. Delbrück's critical attitude towards Jomini's work: Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., pp. 597–598.

38 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 2.2.25, p. 123; c. 2.3, pp. 134–137.

39 *Ibid*., c. 1.3, pp. 70–90; c. 2.2.13, pp. 117–118; c. 2.2.40, p. 130; c. 2.2.42, pp. 130–131. However, Clausewitz opposed the belief that "innate talent" is sufficient. An outstanding commander should improve his abilities through formal education: *ibid*., c. 2.2.40, p. 130.

40 *Ibid*., c. 2.2.6, p. 115; c. 2.5, pp. 144–147.

41 *Ibid*., c. 2.2.12, p. 117; c. 2.2.14–15, pp. 118–119; c. 2.2.17–18, pp. 119–120; c. 2.2.24, p. 123; c. 2.4, p. 137.

could not be represented by equations or diagrams.[42] In fact, he described war as a "chameleon."[43] Delbrück agreed with Clausewitz, taking it a step further. According to Delbrück, one cannot clearly identify the principles of the art of war through experience, reading books, or logical reasoning.[44] The only thing one can learn is the history of military affairs because historical research deals with descriptions of past actions, not future ones. For this reason, in the preface to the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, Delbrück declared his book to be unsuitable for training officers and intended only to promote a better understanding of the past.[45]

Delbrück never considered Clausewitz to be a historian but rather a military writer (*Militärschriftsteller*), as he expressed in an article published in 1878[46] and in an expanded, modified version in 1887.[47] Delbrück's categorization was primarily intended to highlight their differing views on history. Unlike Delbrück, Clausewitz believed, following Georg W. F. Hegel, in the usefulness of history as a foundation for philosophical theories and practical goals.[48] For the Prussian general, studying past wars familiarizes one with the solutions used by great commanders, which one can then apply creatively. Clausewitz clearly adopted Scharnhorst's perspective.[49] While describing selected campaigns and battles, Scharnhorst did not aim to develop a general theory of war as Clausewitz did.[50] Therefore, believing in the practical usefulness of history does not entail un-

42 *Ibid*., c. 2.2.23, p. 122.

43 *Ibid*., c. 1.1.28, p. 49.

44 Hans Delbrück, «General von Clausewitz,» *cit*., p. 39.

45 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LVI.

46 Id., «Clausewitz,» *cit*., p. 221.

47 Id., «General von Clausewitz,» *cit*., pp. 25–26, 28–29.

48 Peter Paret, «Clausewitz as Historian,» in Id., *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, p. 132.

49 Carl von Clausewitz, «On the Life and Character,» *cit*., pp. 100–101; Peter Paret, «Introduction to Part One,» in Carl von Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 10–11; Id., «Clausewitz as Historian,» *cit*., pp. 138–140; Hew Strachan, *Carl von Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 40–41; Donald Stoker, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 32, 101–102.

50 Werner Hahlweg, *Carl von Clausewitz. Soldat, Politiker, Denker*, Muster-Schmidt, Göttingen 1957, p. 74; Peter Paret, «Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century,» in Michael Howard (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of War*, Cassell, Bloomington 1965, p. 26; Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought*, *cit*., pp. 165–166.

reflective imitation. For example, the unconventional army of Revolutionary and Imperial France achieved unprecedented successes against the conservative military commanders of the anti-French coalition. Thus, in Clausewitz's view, history was meant to inspire officers and provide them with knowledge of the historical context rather than simple answers.[51]

The dispute over the model of military education directly leads to broader reflections on the relationship between theory and practice, which has led to the identification of a possible source of *Sachkritik*'s emergence. Although Delbrück had a different view of the purpose of studying military history, it does not preclude him from adopting some of Clausewitz's ideas. What undoubtedly brought Delbrück closer to Clausewitz was their shared belief in the possibility of obtaining objective conclusions and, consequently, in the existence of objective premises possible to discover and properly arranged.[52] Their common view provided an impetus for formulating general theories about the process of cognition.

According to Clausewitz, theory must be based on empiricism, partly in a historical context, to identify the fundamental rules governing reality.[53] Through "friction" (*Friktion*), the theory adapts to the conditions affecting each commander.[54] While theoretical preparation cannot replace military practice, it provides ready-made schemes, making it easier to cope with adversity. Theory should also make commanders aware of the unpredictability and variability of

51 Werner Hahlweg, «Clausewitz und die Französische Revolution. Die methodische Grundlage des Werkes „Vom Kriege",» *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 27, 3, 1975, pp. 243–251; Peter Paret, «Clausewitz,» in Id. (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 193; Id., «Introduction to Part One,» *cit*., p. 3; Id., «Die Funktion der Geschichte in Clausewitz' Verständnis der Krieges,» in Hans Delbrück, Peter Paret, *Krieg, Geschichte, Theorie. Zwei Studien über Clausewitz*, ed. Peter Paret, Miles, Norderstedt 2018, pp. 55–69; Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 205–213; Donald Stoker, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 29, 32; Sebastian Górka, «Znaczenie historii w kształtowaniu się teorii wojny Carla von Clausewitza,» *Historyka. Studia Metodologiczne*, 48, 2018, pp. 358–370; Andreas Herberg-Rothe, «Philosophy and Methodology in Clausewitz's Work,» *The Philosophical Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 6, 1, 2022, pp. 6–9.

52 Peter Paret, «Introduction to Part One,» *cit*., pp. 5, 12–13; Id., «Clausewitz as Historian,» *cit*., pp. 140–141.

53 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 2.2.24–28, pp. 123–126; c. 2.2.44–46, pp. 131–134.

54 *Ibid*., c. 1.7, pp. 97–100.

situations, which require the continuous adaptation of available solutions.[55] In a military context, theory has brought the issue of planning versus improvisation to the forefront—a topic interpreted differently by Clausewitz scholars.[56]

Based on the above reflection, Jon T. Sumida (1949–) presented the controversial thesis about Clausewitz's work: it is not a description of a system of warfare but rather a system of acquiring knowledge. Thus, education was intended to replace experience when it was impossible to obtain.[57] Sumida's interpretation did not gain widespread acceptance in the academic community, in part because it categorized Clausewitz as an author who advocated for "military science." However, Sumida's more significant observation was drawing attention to the fact that, in the Prussian general's writings, theory derived from empirical evidence should serve to educate officers and fill gaps in historical sources. Commanders can acquire the knowledge of a military historian through war experience.[58] Clausewitz believed that the laws of war could be understood and described through the proper application of observations and examples taken from history.

As is well known, Delbrück challenged the idea of the possibility of becoming a historian through military practice. He emphasized the importance of philological education and knowledge of historical context. Nevertheless, he acknowledged the value of general military knowledge in critically interpreting sources, especially when comparing literary motifs with information about terrain, weaponry, and human endurance in the spirit of *Sachkritik*. Therefore, Delbrück's idea of *Sachkritik* can be traced back to Clausewitz's arguments, which is indirectly confirmed by the observation about the usefulness of military treaties to military historians as both a subject of research and a source of

55 *Ibid*., c. 2.2.26–28, pp. 123–126; c. 2.2.37, pp. 128–129; c. 2.4, p. 137.

56 More on this topic: Terence M. Holmes, «Planning versus Chaos in Clausewitz's *On War*,» *JSS*, 30, 1, 2007, pp. 129–151.

57 Jon T. Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to* On War, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence 2008, pp. 78–193. Less definitively: Id., «The Relationship of History and Theory in *On War*: The Clausewitzian Ideal and Its Implications,» *JMH*, 65, 2, 2001, pp. 346–348.

58 Id., «The Relationship of History,» *cit*., p. 344, in connection with Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 2.5, p. 143. Similarly: Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Clausewitz and Contemporary Wars*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, pp. 47–49.

knowledge.[59] Delbrück also emphasized the importance of military experience (including his own), as well as his contacts with prominent Prussian officers.[60]

Delbrück's work shows no indication of a belief in universal laws of war. Instead, he emphasized the importance of discussing past military issues within the context of historical differences. He advocated for the influence of political, social, economic, and cultural factors on the course of changes in the art of war. Delbrück successfully used data related to the physicality and reactions of people and animals, as well as the limitations imposed by natural conditions, to be timeless. Clausewitz observed different ways of waging war among peoples with different lifestyles and forms of government.[61] This illustrates that Delbrück's dependence on Clausewitz was based on creative, often critical reflection aimed at developing his ideas, not imitation. Delbrück largely rejected Clausewitz's idea of describing a system of warfare. Instead, he opted for a historical description of its variants.

Another theme is the consequences of Clausewitz's view of opposing phenomena, which is derived from Hegelian dialectics. The Prussian general adopted Hegel's model of reasoning, based on three elements: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. It is reflected in the dichotomous presentation of certain issues, such as attack versus defense, theory versus practice, or art versus science. The goal was to identify the general laws of war.[62] Clausewitz's scheme, however, did not exhaust all interpretive possibilities. Even so, he tried to minimize the risk of oversimplification by emphasizing the variability of campaign conditions.

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59 Hans Delbrück, «General von Clausewitz,» *cit*., p. 30.

60 Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. LI–LIV.

61 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 8.3b, pp. 700, 702–713.

62 In particular: *ibid*., c. 1.1.15, p. 41; c. 6.1, p. 405. This issue was most fully presented by: Andreas Herberg-Rothe, «Clausewitz und Hegel. Ein heuristischer Vergleich,» *FbpG*, 10, 1, 2000, pp. 49–84; Id., *Clausewitz's Puzzle: The Political Theory of War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, pp. 10, 118, 121, 127–131. Cf. Werner Hahlweg, *Carl von Clausewitz*, *cit*., p. 74; Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, *cit*., p. 150; Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 223–230; Azar Gat, «Clausewitz's Political and Ethical World View,» *Political Studies*, 37, 1989, p. 101; Hew Strachan, *Carl von Clausewitz*, *cit*., p. 95; Id., «The Elusive Meaning and Enduring Relevance of Clausewitz,» in Hal Brands (ed.), *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2023, p. 140; Donald Stoker, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., p. 263. Doubts about Hegel's influence on Clausewitz's writings were expressed by: Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 6–8, 34.

Field Marshal Neidhardt von Gneisenau (1760–1831).

Drawing from his understanding of Clausewitz's Hegelian leanings and his own philosophical inclinations,[63] Delbrück had distinguished two types of strategy, deduced from Clausewitz's work: "strategy of annihilation" (*Niederwerfungsstrategie*) and "strategy of attrition" (*Ermattungsstrategie*). Delbrück first presented his idea in an article published in 1881.[64] He revisited the topic repeatedly in later years, which became one of the main reasons for the famous "strategy dispute" with the German military historical service.[65] The distinction defined by Delbrück does not appear in the section of *Vom Kriege* dedicated to general considerations about strategy.[66] The "strategy of attrition" is explicitly mentioned only in the first book.[67] Delbrück inferred its existence mainly from passages referring to Clausewitz's experiences in the Russian campaign of 1812,[68] which the Prussian general also described in a separate study.[69] Nevertheless, Clausewitz frequently discussed the pursuit of a decisive battle aimed at destroying the enemy's forces, particularly in the fourth book.[70]

As Eberhard Kessel (1907–1986) demonstrated,[71] Clausewitz's notes reveal a plan to thoroughly restructure the content of the first six books (the next two were never completed), which he announced as early as 1827.[72] Most of Clausewitz's arguments about strategy applied to "absolute war" (*absoluter Krieg*), rather than to any kind of conflict. Therefore, generalizing without taking into account the different types of war he distinguished carries a significant risk of misinterpretation. It is uncertain whether a new classification of strategies tai-

63 Peter Rassow, «Hans Delbrück als Historiker und Politiker,» *Die Sammlung*, 4, 1949, p. 139.

64 Hans Delbrück, «Friedrich der Große als Feldherr,» *ZpGL*, 18, 1881, pp. 541–573, in particular pp. 555, 568, and 572. Among leading Clausewitz scholars, Delbrück's view was essentially uncritically endorsed only by: Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 241–264.

65 Regarding the causes and course of the "strategy dispute," see Chapter 4.

66 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 3.1, pp. 176–184.

67 *Ibid*., c. 1.2, p. 56.

68 *Ibid*., c. 8.8, pp. 740–741; c. 8.9, pp. 756–759. Other mentions that might suggest the existence of the "strategy of attrition" in Clausewitz's work: *ibid*., c. 1.2, pp. 54–55; c. 4.9, p. 273; c. 7.6, pp. 638–639; c. 8.8, p. 737.

69 Id., «The Campaign of 1812 in Russia,» in Id., *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 110–204.

70 Id., *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 4.2–12, pp. 235–295.

71 Eberhard Kessel, «Zur Genesis der modernen Kriegslehre. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Clausewitz' Buch „Vom Kriege",» *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, 9, 1953, pp. 405–423.

72 Id., *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., pp. 23–24.

lored to specific types of warfare would have emerged after revising and expanding the first six books, since Clausewitz noted the excessive one-dimensionality of his description. Given Clausewitz's observation that wars in his time had a specific character that might persist in the near future,[73] Delbrück's promotion of two main types of strategy was risky, despite his awareness of the different variants of basic forms and the ambiguities of Clausewitz's arguments.

Delbrück knew he was dealing with an unfinished work, which is why not every war can be assigned to one of the two strategies. Nevertheless, he considered the "strategy of annihilation" and "strategy of attrition" to be fundamental and applicable to most European conflicts.[74] Delbrück had never considered changing strategy during a war as impossible, which aligned with Clausewitz's view of adjusting plans in response to the enemy.[75] In this way he demonstrated a good understanding of Clausewitz's thoughts and refuted the accusation of a dogmatic approach, often leveled at him by authors summarizing the course of the "strategy debate." After all, it would be surprising if the Berlin professor were to express a different opinion regarding the evolution of the German Great General Staff's strategic plans during World War I, which he analyzed continuously.[76]

Thus, Delbrück's distinction between *Niederwerfungsstrategie* and *Ermattungsstrategie* was not exclusive. Rather, it provided a general framework for historical analysis.

Like Clausewitz, Delbrück regarded Napoleon as the true architect of the "strategy of annihilation."[77] Clausewitz participated in the Napoleonic Wars and witnessed the effectiveness of the French army's new style of warfare first-

73 *Ibid*., c. 6.26, pp. 569–570; c. 6.28, pp. 581–582; c. 8.3b, pp. 711–713. Such a development of Clausewitz's idea might suggest the following passage: *ibid*., c. 1.1.11, pp. 37–38.

74 Hans Delbrück, *Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen*, Reimer, Berlin 1890, pp. 2–6; Id., «Falkenhayn und Ludendorff,» *PJ*, 180, 1920, pp. 248–249.

75 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 2.2.23, p. 112.

76 Hans Delbrück, «Falkenhayn und Ludendorff,» *cit*.

77 Delbrück first presented this idea in 1881: Id., «Friedrich der Große als Feldherr,» *cit*., pp. 544, 556–558, and for the last time in 1920: Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [pp. IX–X], 550–581.

hand.[78] Delbrück did not deny the originality of Friedrich II's actions, but the specific nature of the Enlightenment wars made applying *Niederwerfungsstrategie* impossible. For Clausewitz, Friedrich II's campaigns could, at best, be interpreted as a prelude to the "strategy of annihilation" rather than the first instance of its use.[79] His opinion is particularly interesting because, during the "strategy dispute," Delbrück—who modeled his views after Clausewitz—was attacked by opponents who advocated for Friedrich II's primacy. They naturally cited arguments allegedly borrowed from… *Vom Kriege*.[80]

The post-Napoleonic fascination with offense, as reflected in the training of officers in Western European countries, overshadowed Clausewitz's observations on the course of the 1812 war. The French "strategy of annihilation" clashed then with the "strategy of attrition" preferred by the Russians. Napoleon was unable to fully impose his style of warfare—faced with an enemy who retained its combat capability, he was forced to retreat under harsh conditions. Clausewitz, who was serving in the Tsarist army at the time,[81] described the course of 1812 events, yet he still recognized the superiority of attack over defense[82] and advocated for a decisive battle.[83]

A discerning reader should view Clausewitz's experiences as a warning against blindly copying Napoleon's strategies, especially since Clausewitz emphasized the evolving nature of warfare.[84] It is worth recalling World War I, which ultimately turned out to be a war of attrition, contrary to theorists' and planners' expectations.[85] Clausewitz clearly underestimated the impact of tech-

78 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 4.7, p. 257; c. 4.11, p. 280.

79 *Ibid*., c. 1.2, p. 58; c. 2.4, pp. 142–143. Identifying the differences between Friedrich II and Napoleon: *ibid*., c. 4.11, p. 280. More broadly on Clausewitz's perception of the relationship between the strategies of Friedrich II and Napoleon: Jay Luvaas, «Student as Teacher: Clausewitz on Frederick the Great and Napoleon,» *JSS*, 9, 2–3, 1986, pp. 150–170.

80 See Chapter 4.

81 Carl von Clausewitz, «The Campaign of 1812 in Russia,» *cit*.

82 Id., *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 6.5, pp. 420–422; c. 6.7, pp. 429–430; c. 6.9, pp. 446–450; c. 8.7, pp. 734–736; c. 8.8, pp. 737–741; c. 8.9, pp. 741–770.

83 *Ibid*., c. 4.3–5, pp. 237–253; c. 4.7, pp. 255–261; c. 4.9–11, pp. 265–284.

84 *Ibid*., c. 6.26, pp. 569–570; c. 6.28, pp. 581–582; c. 8.3b, pp. 711–713.

85 In the context of Delbrück's interpretation: Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 344.

nological progress on the feasibility of maneuver warfare. Delbrück witnessed the destructive power of fire during the Battle of Gravelotte in 1870,[86] and yet Moltke's campaigns were still broadly considered an example of the post-Napoleonic style of warfare.

In Clausewitz's works the key to winning a battle was breaking the opponent's physical and psychological resistance.[87] He placed greater importance on the latter, because military success does not necessarily require killing more enemies if their will to fight can be broken[88]—a truism that, thanks to the dominant role of pop culture in shaping the modern image of wars, has become specialized knowledge. Delbrück discovered its authenticity in 1870,[89] which accompanied him throughout his academic career, particularly in his analysis of the Battle of Cannae.[90]

Clausewitz focused on strategy and tactics, which also dominated Delbrück's work. Therefore, the influence of the Prussian general on the "father of military history" should also be viewed within dominant categories for analysis. Delbrück's historical preferences posed a risk because strategy and tactics were the domain of professional officers. Their education and experience should have given them an advantage in any discussion, at least theoretically. Delbrück mitigated the risk of being dominated by taking an exclusively historical approach, which—combined with his belief in the non-existence of the universal laws of war—shifted the emphasis to the changes occurring in the art of war and its conditions.

As a scholar interested in the cognitive rather than practical functions of history, Delbrück addressed issues absent or marginalized in Clausewitz's work.

The first issue was the influence of the political system and social structure on the organization of the army. One might wonder why Delbrück devoted so

86 Hans Delbrück, «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» in Arden Bucholz (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, pp. 45–48.

87 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege, cit*., c. 1.2, p. 52; c. 3.3, pp. 185–187; c. 4.4, pp. 243–244; c. 4.11, p. 278.

88 *Ibid*., c. 4.11, p. 278.

89 Hans Delbrück, «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» *cit.*, p. 278.

90 Id., «Die Manipularlegion und die Schlacht bei Cannae,» *Hermes*, 21, 1, 1886, pp. 65–90; Id., «Die Schlacht bei Cannä,» *HZ*, 109 (3), 1912, pp. 481–507; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 364–392.

much attention to this topic in his publications when neither Clausewitz nor other military writers typically addressed it. Delbrück's familiarity with the earliest eras, including antiquity and the Middle Ages, was likely decisive. Considering antiquity, the term "soldier" (or more broadly, "man-at-arms") referred to the role of a citizen or tribal member rather than a profession, with a few exceptions such as the Roman imperial army or mercenaries. Delbrück emphasized the socio-political aspects much more strongly in the first three volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* but downplayed them in his characterization of modern military history.

Delbrück's demographic studies, also not within the scope of interest for Clausewitz, allowed for the estimation of a warring parties' mobilization potential. For Delbrück, demography was the key to determining the number of combatants. Using numbers provided by authors of narrative sources and official documents, members of the German military historical service attempted to draw broad conclusions. However, their arguments were often based on narrative schemes rather than realistic descriptions, which Delbrück was quick to point out.

Clausewitz also omitted another important thematic area: the impact of economic models and production relations on a state's military potential and the course of wars. To illustrate the importance of economic issues, it is enough to take an example of the Middle Ages, the subject of Delbrück's first academic interest. The influence of feudalism on medieval military affairs is undeniable and may prompt the search for analogous connections in other historical periods. What seems obvious today was innovative at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It even earned Delbrück the appreciation of Franz Mehring, despite Delbrück's anti-Marxist views.[91] On the contrary, the officer corps did not necessarily view Delbrück's special abilities as an advantage, as they were not accustomed to incorporating economic issues into military history.

Another difference was Delbrück's belief that understanding the specific nature of intended sources is the first step in researching any historical issue. Clausewitz showed little source criticism. His main focus was on conflicts in-

91 Franz Mehring, «Eine Geschichte der Kriegskunst,» in Id, *Zur Kriegsgeschichte und Militärfrage*, ed. Thomas Höhle, Hans Koch, Josef Schleifstein, Gesammelte Schriften, 8, Dietz, Berlin 1967, pp. 135–137, 200.

volving Revolutionary and Imperial France, which gave him the illusion of complete control over the subject matter. The greater the distance (in time and culture) between the researcher and the subject being described, the more likely an intuitive assessment of source credibility will be inaccurate. Consequently, Delbrück denied Clausewitz the status of a historian, partly because of his minimal criticism of sources, both internal and external.[92] Making a mistake and accepting an incorrect analogy can have disastrous consequences and cost human lives.

Despite the aforementioned differences, Clausewitz significantly influenced Delbrück's scholarly work, perhaps even decisively. The overlap in time between Delbrück's interest in military history and his study of Clausewitz's ideas does not seem to be a coincidence. Clausewitz wrote during a time when history had just become a field of fully academic study, but academic institutions had not yet begun researching military affairs. This must have led to differences in the general view of historiography and in specific matters. Nevertheless, the title of Delbrück's most notable work shows that academic military history originated with Clausewitz and the intellectual movement he started.

92 Hans Delbrück, «General von Clausewitz,» *cit*., pp. 25–26, 28–29.

Chapter 4

The conflict with the German military historical service

4.1 The German military historical service at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

One of the most important events in Hans Delbrück's academic career was the "strategy dispute" (*Strategiestreit*), which took place from 1879 to 1914. The controversy was between the "father of military history" and representatives of the military historical service, primarily from the Prussian General Staff and, later, the German Great General Staff. The dispute aimed to clarify the relationship between the strategic concepts attributed to Friedrich II, Napoleon I Bonaparte, General Carl von Clausewitz, and Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder. It was also a clash between two visions of writing military history and creating national heroes and symbols. The outbreak of World War I redirected both sides' attention to current events. While strategic issues still appeared in the publications of Delbrück and his polemicists, they were more often related to the plans and actions of Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen, General Erich von Falkenhayn, and General Erich Ludendorff. Consequently, discussions about Moltke's inspirations naturally cooled, making way for disputes about the causes of Germany's defeat in the Great War.[1]

1 In 1920, Delbrück summarized the course of the "strategy dispute": Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, pp. 495–501. However, the list of publications he provided is incomplete. The additions were effectively undertaken by: Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹. Kriegführung und Kriegsgeschichte in der Kontroverse 1879–1914*, Rombach, Freiburg im Breisgau 1995, pp. 150–155, although his compilation also lacks several important works.

Such a large-scale escalation would most likely not have occurred without Moltke's famous 1890 interview. When asked which books had influenced him the most, Moltke mentioned Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege*, among others.[2] The great career of the Prussian general's work began, which culminated in its "canonization." However, Clausewitz's popularity was not matched by readership. Readers typically limited their knowledge of Clausewitz's theories to short excerpts and paraphrases. Citing *Vom Kriege* became fashionable in the Prussian officer corps only because it evoked associations with Moltke. Due to widespread ignorance of the publication's actual content, Clausewitz was sometimes attributed statements he never wrote.[3] The focus on the sources of Moltke's victories persisted among military historians until the outbreak of the Great War.[4]

Even worse, Moltke was only familiar with the second edition of *Vom Kriege*,[5]

2 Eberhard Kessel, *Moltke*, Koehler, Stuttgart 1957, p. 108; Franz Herre, *Moltke. Der Mann und sein Jahrhundert*, Deutsche Verlags-Anhalt, Stuttgart 1984, p. 13; Jochen Thies, *Die Moltkes. Biografie einer Familie*, Piper, München 2012, p. 103.

3 Werner Hahlweg, *Carl von Clausewitz. Soldat, Politiker, Denker*, Muster-Schmidt, Göttingen 1957, p. 105; Peter Paret, «Clausewitz: A Bibliographical Survey,» *World Politics*, 17, 2, 1965, pp. 280–281; Id., «Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century,» in Michael Howard (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of War*, Cassell, Bloomington 1965, pp. 29–30; Id., «Die Funktion der Geschichte in Clausewitz' Verständnis der Krieges,» in Hans Delbrück, Peter Paret, *Krieg, Geschichte, Theorie. Zwei Studien über Clausewitz*, ed. Peter Paret, Miles, Norderstedt 2018, pp. 70–71; Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, 1, University of Miami Press, Coral Gables 1969, pp. 195–196; Jehuda L. Wallach, *Das Dogma der Vernichtungsschlacht. Die Lehren von Clausewitz und Schlieffen und ihre Wirkung in zwei Weltkriegen*, dtv, München 1970, pp. 284–289; Id., «Misperceptions of Clausewitz' *On War* by the German Military,» *JSS*, 9, 2–3, 1986, pp. 214–215; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City 1985, p. 6; Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1986, p. 247; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 73; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Borrowing from the Master: Uses of Clausewitz in German Military Literature before the Great War,» *War in History*, 3, 3, 1996, pp. 277–278; Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz*, Pimlico, London 2002, pp. 59–62.

4 [Hugo] von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Menschen und Dinge wie ich sie in meinem Leben sah*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1923, p. 133.

5 Jehuda L. Wallach, *Das Dogma der Vernichtungsschlacht*, *cit*., pp. 284–289; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, «Der Verfall der deutschen Kriegstheorie: Vom »Absoluten« zum »Totalen« Krieg oder von Clausewitz zu Ludendorff,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 286–287; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 6; Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 234–235; Hew Strachan, «Clausewitz and the Dialectics of War,» in Hew Strachan, Andreas Herberg-Rothe (ed.), *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century*,

published in 1853. It was modified by Clausewitz's brother-in-law, General Friedrich W. von Brühl (1791–1859).[6] As a result, Moltke's conflict with Otto von Bismarck, which arose from their differing views on the relationship between political and military power, was essentially a conflict between one man who was not fully aware of Clausewitz's original views (Moltke) and another who was entirely unaware of them (Bismarck).[7] Nevertheless, some people cite this event as proof of the enduring value of Clausewitz's work, which remained relevant several decades later. For instance, General Sigismund von Schlichting described Moltke as the "most perceptive and faithful student of Clausewitz."[8] Initially, Delbrück also linked the two figures without determining whether their similar understanding of war came from reflecting on *Vom Kriege* or was merely coincidental.[9]

Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, pp. 19–20, 25; Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz*, *cit*., p. 59.

6 Werner Hahlweg, *Carl von Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 84–85, 91; Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State: The Man, His Theories, and His Times*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1976, pp. 429–430; Hew Strachan, *Carl von Clausewitz's* On War*: A Biography*, Grove Press, New York 2007, pp. 69–71; Donald Stoker, *Clausewitz: His Life and Work*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, p. 281. Brühl's most significant contribution was his proposal that the commander-in-chief participate in political decision-making in the event of war. In contrast, Clausewitz believed that establishing and realizing the political objective were the government's exclusive prerogatives: Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, Nikol, Hamburg 2008 [1832], c. 11.28, pp. 49–50; c. 8.6b, pp. 726–734. The use of the second edition of *Vom Kriege* by German officers significantly influenced their views. There were even voices calling for a ban on civilian authorities engaging in war: Colmar von der Goltz, *Das Volk in Waffen. Ein Buch über Heerwesen und Kriegführung unserer Zeit*, Decker, Berlin 1883, pp. 7–13; Id., *Krieg- und Heerführung*, Decker, Berlin 1901, pp. 11–13. The best solution would be to combine political and military competence in the hands of one person: Friedrich von Bernhardi, *On War of To-Day*, 2, Rees, London 1913, pp. 182–202; [Erich] Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1922, pp. 1–23, 320–342. Militaristic demands had a significant impact on the position of the German command during World War I and in later years.

7 Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640–1945*, Oxford University Press, London–Oxford–New York 1955, pp. 204–215; Eberhard Kessel, *Moltke*, *cit*., pp. 577–592; Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army*, Pall Mall, London 1966, pp. 109–111; Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*, 1, *cit*., pp. 199–206, 223–238, 257–260; Jehuda L. Wallach, *Das Dogma der Vernichtungsschlacht*, *cit*., pp. 289–291; Manfred Messerschmidt, *Militär und Politik in der Bismarckzeit und im Wilhelminischen Deutschland*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1975, pp. 8–31; Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 241–243.

8 Sigismund von Schlichting, *Taktische und strategische Grundsätze der Gegenwart*, 2, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1898, p. 90.

9 Hans Delbrück, «Moltke,» in Id., *Erinnerungen, Aufsätze und Reden*, Stilke, Berlin 1902, pp.

Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder (1800–1891).

The defeat of France in 1871 occupies a unique place in the German collective imagination. It was presented as revenge for the defeat in 1806–1807, especially since, at the outbreak of the war, the supreme commander of the opposing state was Napoleon III Bonaparte (1808–1873), who evoked clear associations with his famous uncle. Along with the successful campaigns of 1813–1815, the 1871 victory led to the belief that Prussian military strategies were superior to those of the French. Two strategists, the theorist Clausewitz and the practitioner Moltke, supposedly symbolized a sense of military superiority. However, Clausewitz belonged to a reformist group centered around General Gerhard von Scharnhorst. Its members drew inspiration from French solutions, calling into question the alleged Prussian superiority. Making matters worse, Scharnhorst was a Hanoverian,[10] and his close collaborator, General Neidhardt von Gneisenau, was a Saxon.[11]

After the reactionary fraction's political triumph in 1819, pointing out "Jacobin" tendencies in the Prussian Army was simply forbidden. Likewise, openly acknowledging Clausewitz's (and, by extension, Moltke's) inspiration from the French military system was unthinkable. The Prussians needed a native hero whose victories could be linked to Clausewitz and Moltke. Friedrich II was the obvious choice, enabling Moltke to be seen as the continuator of the famous monarch's military legacy.[12] The incompatibility of the Enlightenment period's diplomatic environment and the art of war with the realities of the second half of the nineteenth century was not an obstacle because Prussian military history remained the exclusive domain of the military historical service. Rather than

546–575 (a combined version of texts published in *Preußische Jahrbücher* in 1890, 1891, and 1900).

10 Carl von Clausewitz, «On the Life and Character of Scharnhorst,» in Id., *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, p. 89; Georg H. Klippel, *Das Leben des General von Scharnhorst*, 1, *1755 von 1793*, Brockhaus, Leipzig 1869, p. 9; Johannes Kunisch, «Scharnhorst, Gerhard von,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 22, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 2005, p. 574.

11 Georg H. Pertz, *Das Leben des Feldmarchalls Grafen Neithardt von Gneisenau*, 1, Reimer, Berlin 1864, pp. 3–4; Hermann Teske, «Gneisenau, August Graf Neidhardt von,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 6, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1964, pp. 484–485.

12 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab. Die friderizianischen Kriege in der amtlichen deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1890–1914*, Rombach, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, pp. 119–120.

conducting multifaceted, in-depth studies of Friedrich II's reign, the authors, who originated from the officer corps, aimed to strengthen patriotism and pride in ancestral achievements and cultivate regimental traditions.[13] Their attitude allowed them to promote any content and adapt it to current needs, as there were no scholars capable of verifying the content or confident enough to initiate a debate about it.[14] Notably, Moltke never claimed to have modeled himself after Friedrich II. Nevertheless, the King of Prussia became a central figure in military historiography.[15]

Friedrich II was already a prominent figure in Prussian culture. Among his greatest admirers was Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), the older brother of the more famous Alexander (1769–1859). Wilhelm played a key role in popularizing the King of Prussia's achievements.[16] Although not entirely accurate, Friedrich II was considered the embodiment of victory in the popular imagination and was often invoked in response to the shame of the years 1806–1807.[17] The

13 On the creation of Friedrich II's image in works published under the auspices of the Great General Staff: *ibid*., pp. 103–115; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 60–74. See also Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*, 1, *cit*., p. 20; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 4.

14 Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military*, Meridian, New York 1959, pp. 32–33; Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung zur heutigen Militärgeschichte,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, p. 18; Johann C. Allmayer-Beck, «Die Militärgeschichte in ihrem Verhältnis zur historischen Gesamtwissenschaft,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 180–182; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 5; Id., «Introduction: Delbrück's Life and Work,» in Id. (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, pp. 13–15; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 51–62; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 44–48, 52–53, 54–58, 73–74; Id., «Hans Delbrück: Der Kritiker der Kriegsgeschichte,» in Hans Ehlert (ed.), *Deutsche Militärhistoriker von Hans Delbrück bis Andreas Hillgruber*, Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt, Potsdam 2010, pp. 9–10; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Heroic History and Vicarious War: Nineteenth-Century German Military Writing,» *The Historian*, 59, 3, 1997, pp. 573–589.

15 [Hugo] von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Menschen und Dinge*, *cit*., p. 76.

16 Felix Saure, «Agamemnon on the Battlefield of Leipzig: Wilhelm von Humboldt on Ancient Warriors, Modern Heroes, and *Bildung* through War,» in Elisabeth Krimmer, Patricia A. Simpson (ed.), *Enlightened War: German Theories and Cultures of Warfare from Frederick the Great to Clausewitz*, Camden House, New York–Woodbridge 2011, pp. 75–102.

17 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 93–103.

rise of nationalism and Romanticism turned Friedrich II into a symbol of Prussian power, celebrated in the spirit of the dominant idealism of the time. Historians such as Heinrich von Sybel, Heinrich von Treitschke, Gustav Schmoller, and Reinhold Koser (1852–1914) were also not indifferent to Friedrich II. Therefore, the stance of the military historical service was not unique against the backdrop of the dominant trend at the time.[18]

A direct connection between Friedrich II and Clausewitz was difficult to establish because, although the Prussian general respected the monarch's military successes, he recognized Napoleon as the originator of the "strategy of annihilation."[19] As previously mentioned, the Military Reorganization Commission, led by Scharnhorst, developed reform projects inspired by French solutions.

The unauthorized associations appear to stem from a lack of knowledge about *Vom Kriege*. The book only gained popularity after Moltke's statements became well known. Officers of the historical service came of age during the period of reaction, so they naturally interpreted Clausewitz's writings through the lens of their political views. Since they were not conducting academic research, they did not perceive establishing the historical context as important. Instead, they focused on proving the continuity of the Prussian military tradition. To them, Clausewitz could easily be seen as the successor to Friedrich II's ideas.

The Prussian General Staff played a key role in developing this narrative because it oversaw the institutions responsible for researching military history.

The Prussian General Staff was established in 1808 by the Military Reorganization Commission as an organ of the Ministry of War (Kriegsministerium). Two years later, the General War School was founded and renamed the Royal Prussian War Academy (Königlich Preußische Kriegsakademie) in 1859. Initially, its lecturers were the only ones involved in military studies. The situation changed in 1816 when a new unit, the War History Department (Abteilung für Kriegsgeschichte), was established within the General Staff. From then on, the responsibility for conducting research shifted to the Department, though officers assigned to the War Academy could still publish historical works. In 1821, the Department was renamed the War History Section (Sektion für Kriegsges-

18 Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Heroic History and Vicarious War,» *cit*., pp. 580–581.

19 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, *cit*., c. 4.7, p. 257; c. 4.11, p. 280.

chichte). This change had little impact on its objectives, but it was associated with a significant reduction in budget and staff.[20]

The unification of Germany in 1871 resulted in the formation of the Great General Staff, which included the reorganized War History Department (Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung). The Department's head reported directly to the General Quartermaster (*Generalquartiermeister*), the head of the General Staff. In 1896, the War History Department lost its independence as a result of the reforms carried out by Schlieffen. Afterwards, it was incorporated into the Fifth Department. An officer holding the rank of Chief Quartermaster (*Oberquartiermeister*) headed the Fifth Department. Officers of the military historical service were divided between two units: the First War History Department, which dealt with modern wars (Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung I: neuere Kriegsgeschichte), and the Second War History Department, which focused on older conflicts (Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II: ältere Kriegsgeschichte). In 1872, the War Academy came under the authority of the Chief of the General Staff.[21]

The historiographical model implemented by the War History Department and subsequently by the War History Departments was shaped early on during Scharnhorst's time. According to its primordial version, the basis for creating any historical generalizations or military theories should be based on an analysis of experiences, whether from recently concluded wars or historical studies.

20 Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., p. 18; Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff 1657–1945*, Barnes & Noble, Boulder–London 1985, p. 53; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 33, 63–64; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 40–44, 49–52, 148; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik. Der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1914–1956*, Schöningh, Paderborn 2002, p. 34; Jacek Jędrysiak, *Prussian Strategic Thought 1815–1830: Beyond Clausewitz*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2020, pp. 20, 22, 149, 163. The change from Department to Section involved a reduction in the number of positions (at one point even down to four), which were increased again in 1862 at Moltke's request. The maximum number was 19: Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., p. 20; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., p. 34; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 52.

21 Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., pp. 20–24; Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff*, *cit*., p. 116; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 64–67; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 52–54, 149; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik*, *cit*., pp. 35–36; Jacek Jędrysiak, *Prussian Strategic Thought*, *cit*., p. 24.

Scharnhorst believed this was the only way to draw effective conclusions for future conflicts. Thus, military history gained a practical dimension, becoming a source of inspiration for improving the art of war while minimizing its general value.[22]

History written from the "general staff perspective" had one fundamental flaw: it disregarded source criticism. As a result, the context of the work's creation, genre conventions, and terminological differences were overlooked. The publications' educational and formative function was realized by creating a one-dimensional image of the characters, highlighting fragments of sources that fit the preconceived thesis, and omitting inconvenient passages. As late as 1923, General Hugo von Freytag-Loringhoven—who served in the War History Department from 1893 to 1895 and from 1898 to 1901 and was then head of the First War History Department from 1901 to 1907[23]—wrote about the fundamental purpose of military history: to inspire imitation of the deeds of great commanders and to foster pride in being a German soldier.[24] General Colmar von der Goltz, who was a member of the War History Department from 1871 to 1873 and a lecturer at the War Academy from 1878 to 1883,[25] emphasized the

22 Carl H. Hermann, *Deutsche Militärgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1966, p. 3; Jehuda L. Wallach, *Das Dogma der Vernichtungsschlacht*, *cit*., pp. 116–119; Ursula von Gersdorff, «Einführung,» in Ead. (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, p. 7; Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., p. 18; Johann C. Allmayer-Beck, «Die Militärgeschichte,» *cit*., pp. 180–182; Hajo Holborn, «The Prussian-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 283; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 326; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 51–62; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 40–48, 54–58; Id., «Hans Delbrück: Der Kritiker,» *cit*., pp. 9–10; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Heroic History and Vicarious War,» *cit*., pp. 573–574, 583; Arden Bucholz, «Introduction,» *cit*., pp. 13–15; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik*, *cit*., pp. 37–41, 48–50.

23 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., p. 190; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 53.

24 [Hugo] von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Menschen und Dinge*, *cit*., p. 74.

25 Hermann Teske, «Goltz-Pascha, Colmar Freiherr von der,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 6, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1964, p. 630; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 53.

practical value of military history even more strongly. In his opinion, history enables one to grasp the general principles of war and serves as a foundation for officer training, alongside participation in maneuvers and individual reflection.[26] He had previously warned against placing too much importance on studying history because, although it can provide new soldiers with a general understanding of war, it is inferior to personal experience.[27] Considering the ongoing technological progress and social transformations impacting the army's mobilization potential, his stance was quite rational.

However, the German officers' approach could have led to the oversimplification and idealization of the past. Under the auspices of the Great General Staff, historical studies were published to properly develop an officer's competence and personality. These studies were not necessarily written with the intention of understanding the specifics of the past[28] but also served to highlight the role of individuals in history, leading to the belief in the necessity of strict obedience to the commander-in-chief.[29]

Moltke, who served as Chief of the Prussian General Staff from 1857 to 1871 and as Chief of the Great General Staff from 1871 to 1888, exacerbated the negative trends. In 1862, he reorganized the War History Department, making it more formal. He tightened the censorship of publications, which had increased since 1823. According to Moltke, potential enemies of Prussia could use the publications to determine the direction of the institution's strategic and tactical developments.[30] During Schlieffen's tenure from 1891 to 1906, the military historical service temporarily enjoyed greater freedom of action, possibly due to his experience serving in the Prussian General Staff.[31] After a brief period of

26 Colmar von der Goltz, *Krieg- und Heerführung*, *cit*., p. 2. In a similar vein, but with a greater emphasis on the indispensability of historical education: Friedrich von Bernhardi, *On War of To-Day*, 1, Rees, London 1912, pp. 2, 8, 46–50, 54–55.

27 Colmar von der Goltz, *Das Volk in Waffen*, *cit*., pp. 29, 63–64, 77, 203, 232.

28 Johann C. Allmayer-Beck, «Die Militärgeschichte,» *cit*., pp. 183–184; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 54–58; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «On the Brink of the Abyss: The Warrior Identity and German Military Thought before the Great War,» *War & Society*, 13, 2, 1995, p. 24; Id., «Borrowing from the Master,» *cit*., pp. 276–278; Id., «Heroic History and Vicarious War,» *cit*., pp. 573–574, 581, 588.

29 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 152–157.

30 [Hugo] von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Menschen und Dinge*, *cit*., p. 95.

31 *Ibid*., pp. 96–97, 132–134. Perhaps General Friedrich von Bernhardi had a different opin-

liberalization in 1897, the regulations tightened again. Officers were now required to submit all publications on historical and military topics to Department heads for approval. In 1904, disciplinary responsibility for noncompliance was defined. Schlieffen's ordinances, along with the rather loose historical analogies used by officers assigned to the Departments, resulted in an even greater simplification of the past than before.[32]

Some historians fully trust publications issued under the banner of the (Great) General Staff due to their ignorance of contemporary changes, treating papers written by officers as completely reliable reflections of the concepts discussed at the time. At Moltke's order, they were stripped of content qualified as sensitive yet crucial for understanding historical patterns in the planning process. Findings regarding the organization of the Prussian Army of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as topographical studies and orders of battle, certainly retain high value. However, strategic analyses and biographies have fared the worst over time: the former due to prevailing censorship and the latter due to authorial priorities driven by propaganda and education.[33]

Moltke recognized the importance of military education because a new generation of officers, who were unfamiliar with war, had joined the Prussian Army. He placed great importance on maneuvers, war games, and field studies. He also found contemporary personal accounts written by war participants to be useful. History was meant to serve theory, a notion reflected in the historical-military publications prepared under his auspices, which primarily concerned the recent-

ion. He was removed from his position after clashing with Schlieffen, and he responded with a difficult-to-verify statement that Moltke had opposed Schlieffen's appointment as Chief of the Great General Staff: Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1927, p. 255. The differing views of Bernhardi and his superior were expressed, among other things, in their different assessments of Delbrück's work, which will be discussed further in this chapter. However, the main source of disagreement was the far-reaching difference in the assessment of strategic plans, rather than historiographical concepts: Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, 2, University of Miami Press, Coral Gables 1970, p. 113.

32 Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Heroic History and Vicarious War,» *cit*., pp. 578–579; Jacek Jędrysiak, *Prussian Strategic Thought*, *cit*., pp. 20–21.

33 A complete list of works published under the auspices of the General Staff has been compiled only for the years 1883–1914: Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., pp. 39–54.

ly concluded Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars.[34] Under the new conditions, freedom in choosing the topic or method of development was unthinkable. Schlieffen's reforms resulted in a widening gap between the research conducted at universities and the work of the Department.[35]

As a result, historical works published by the Prussian General Staff and, later, the Great General Staff cannot be viewed simply as merely the product of a distinct historiographical school, separate from academic trends. Their utilitarian nature should always be kept in mind, which is manifested by either searching for patterns in the past that can be applied to the present or by strengthening patriotism and fostering an emotional connection with the army. The (Great) General Staff's research perspective put civilian polemicists in a difficult position because presenting irrefutable arguments did not guarantee productive discussions. Instead, it exposed polemicists to serious nonmeritorious accusations.

The authority of the Prussian General Staff increased immeasurably thanks to the victories in 1866 and 1871. The rise of its position was reflected in the reception of publications prepared by the War History Department. The belief in the high qualifications of Moltke's officers was so strong that it essentially encompassed every aspect of their service.[36] Moltke was simply portrayed as a military genius, and his interpretations were considered unquestionable.[37] Challenging the content published under the (Great) General Staff's banner required confronting environmental solidarity and prevailing public sentiment. If the discussion took an unfavorable turn, officers could always appeal to Moltke, who, like Clausewitz, opposed dogmatism and advocated for simplicity and flexibility in solutions.[38] Moltke's stance could theoretically work against his epigones,

34 Eberhard Kessel, «Moltke und die Kriegsgeschichte,» *Militärwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, 3, 1941, pp. 112–125. See also Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., pp. 46–46 (list of publications).

35 *Ibid*., pp. 20–23; Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff*, *cit*., pp. 96–97; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 7.

36 Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff*, *cit*., p. 95.

37 Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, *cit*., pp. 25–26; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Moltke and the German Military Tradition: His Theories and Legacies,» *Parameters*, 26, 1, 1996, pp. 91–99.

38 [Helmuth von] Moltke, *Aufsatz vom Jahre 1871 über Strategie*, in Id., *Militärische Schriften*, 2, 2, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1900, pp. 291–292; Id., *Gedanken von Moltke*, Atlantis, Berlin 1941, p. 13.

Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen (1833–1913).

who were strongly attached to a one-dimensional view of history. However, his flexibility enabled him to adapt many inconsistent ideas to his actions. Consequently, Moltke met a similar fate as Clausewitz. Various authors associated him with different claims and presented themselves as stewards of his legacy when needed.[39]

Additionally, the profession of an officer was widely respected. The great scope of appreciation even extended to reserve officers like Delbrück.[40] For obvious reasons, their status paled in comparison with the authority of officers serving in the Great General Staff, who were perceived as the army's intellectual elite. Prussian and later German officers tended to emphasize their superiority over civilians, sometimes leading to social alienation and ostentatious arrogance.[41] Members of the (Great) General Staff formed an exclusive social group, even toward officers with more service time and combat experience. By shaping official military historiography, they were able to impose their perspective on the course of recent wars and the significance of their institution. This furthered their sense of elitism and distance from other officers.[42]

The growing importance of the Great General Staff coincided with the rise of militarism, which is defined as the adoption of the values, behaviors, and sense of hierarchy of the military by the civilian population.[43] Unlike Moltke

39 Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Moltke and the German,» *cit*.

40 Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps 1890–1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1968, p. 121; Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*, 2, *cit*., pp. 101–102; Wolfram Wette, *Militarismus in Deutschland: Geschichte einer kriegerischen Kultur*, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main 2011, p. 211.

41 Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, *cit*., pp. 252–253; Rainer Wohlfeil, «Wehr-, Kriegs- oder Militärgeschichte?,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, p. 27; Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps*, *cit*., pp. XXI–XXII, 115–116, 118; Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., p. 18; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., p. 4; Id., «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *cit*., p. 520; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 145–151; Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik*, *cit*., p. 102. On the patterns of behavior and the code of honor observed by the officers of the Great General Staff at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps*, *cit*., pp. 49–63.

42 *Ibid*., p. 6.

43 On the various dimensions of German militarism during this period: Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*, 2, *cit*., pp. 97–104; Manfred Messerschmidt, *Militär und Politik*, *cit*.,

and his supporters,[44] Delbrück strongly opposed this phenomenon. In his view, Germany's strength should stem from cultural achievements rather than from subjugating society to the needs of a potential armed conflict.[45] Expressing such opinions alone carried the risk of his critical interpretations being seen as a politically motivated attack on the institution of the army.

In light of the changes to the military historical service organization, the "strategy dispute" initiated by Delbrück in 1878 occurred in two phases. The first phase took place until 1896 and involved the unified War History Department. The second phase began after 1896 and involved two Departments focusing on different areas of analysis. The proposed periodization provides a clearer understanding of the progression of the discussion than Sven Lange's (1967–) scheme, which is based solely on the content of published works.[46] Most importantly, the new approach clarifies how personnel changes impacted the course of the conflict, emphasizing the human factor and dispelling the notion of uniformity among "historians in military uniforms."

4.2 The first stage of the conflict (1878–1896)

The direct cause of the conflict was the publication of a work by Major Adalbert von Taysen (1832–1906). He served in the War History Department from 1871 to 1892, heading the Department from 1874 to 1881.[47] In 1878, he submitted Friedrich II's "military testament" from 1768, along with an introduction, for publication.[48] Taysen's edition caught the attention of Delbrück, who was finishing a biography of Gneisenau at the time. Taysen attempted to demonstrate the groundbreaking significance of the published document for understanding the

pp. 55–74, 130–146; Wolfram Wette, *Militarismus in Deutschland*, *cit*., pp. 64–84.

44 In a letter dated December 11, 1880, Moltke expressed his belief that the noblest qualities of man are revealed in war, and without it, the world would sink into materialism: [Helmuth von] Moltke, *Moltke in seinen Briefen. Mit einem Lebens- und Charakterbild des Verewigten*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1902, pp. 252–253.

45 See pp. 61–64.

46 Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 83–113.

47 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 63, 191.

48 Adalbert von Taysen, «Das Militärische Testamente Friedrichs des Großen,» in *Miscellaneen zur König Friedrichs des Großen*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1878, pp. 110–204.

origins of the Prussian military system, but his efforts were met with disapproval by the prince's tutor. In his review, Delbrück questioned the "testament's" value for studies on Friedrich II's military practices. He added that substantiating such broad claims would necessitate tracing changes back to 1768 and evaluating the feasibility of the Prussian king's ideas in subsequent years. In short, Delbrück denied the validity of seeing anything in the published document besides evidence of the time in which it was created.[49]

Goltz responded angrily, though his response had little to do with defending Taysen's position substantively. Goltz emphasized Delbrück's interference in the military historical service's competence to be an act of unacceptable impudence. He expressed hope that no civilian would ever again attempt to instruct officers on how to interpret specific episodes of military history.[50] Goltz's criticism obviously was not directed at Delbrück's arguments but rather at his civilian status.

Delbrück prepared a reply. In his opinion, sources should be interpreted in the context of the time in which they were created. Being or not being an officer is not decisive to interpret sources in a proper way. Even though Friedrich II is currently seen as an inspiration, imitation is not the same as a model. Knowledge of the present cannot be the key to understanding the past. Geography was the primary factor limiting Friedrich II's possibilities, and overcoming the difficulties it presented required resources he simply did not have. The potential of an eighteenth-century state was not similar to Prussia's in the second half of the nineteenth century, and therefore the assumption of the possibility of replicating Friedrich II's strategy is nothing more than a manifestation of ahistorical thinking.[51]

The historical interpretation favored by Taysen and Goltz derived directly from the existing description of the wars fought by Friedrich II, who was recognized as an inspiration for Napoleon and Moltke. Their point of view is also reflected in the two-volume military biography of the Prussian monarch published

49 Hans Delbrück, rev. *Das militärische Testament Friedrich des Großen*. Herausgeben und Erläutert von Taysen, Major in Großem Generalstab, *ZpGL*, 16, 1879, pp. 27–32.

50 Colmar von der Goltz, «Antikritik,» *ZpGL*, 16, 1879, pp. 292–304.

51 Hans Delbrück, «Duplik,» *ZpGL*, 16, 1879, pp. 305–314.

in 1881 and written by Major Friedrich von Bernhardi,[52] who later became a general. Bernhardi explicitly called Napoleon a "student of Friedrich II," attributing the introduction of a "strategy of annihilation" to the Prussian king.[53] The work was written in a panegyric tone, only marginally addressing issues of diplomacy and domestic policy while highlighting the king's and his officers' steadfastness and foresight.

In 1881, Delbrück published two reviews to address the problem. The first was about Bernhardi's work,[54] and the second was about the first volume of Martin Philippson's (1846–1916) history of the Prussian state.[55] In both cases, the conclusions were negative. Delbrück pointed out the instrumental use of Friedrich II's image to glorify modern Prussia, which took the form of manipulating sources. According to Delbrück, the evolution of the Prussian state was not linear, and successive rulers and their entourages had different attitudes toward the legacy of their great predecessor. Commenting on Bernhardi's arguments, Delbrück asserted that the principles of academic analysis should be applied when discussing historical topics rather than the rules of general staff analysis. His approach would provide a more accurate portrayal of Napoleon's relationship with Friedrich II, and the King of Prussia would no longer be viewed as the architect of a "strategy of annihilation."[56] Notably, it was then when the Berlin professor first presented the dichotomous division into "strategy of attrition" and "strategy of annihilation," interpreted from Clausewitz's work.[57]

During this period, Delbrück could still count on relatively lenient treatment from representatives of the military historical service. His association with Crown Prince Friedrich and General Leonhard von Blumenthal was well known. Both men had distinguished themselves during the wars against Austria

52 Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Friedrich der Große als Feldherr*, 1–2, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1881.

53 *Ibid*., 2, pp. 2–24, 647.

54 Hans Delbrück, «Friedrich der Große als Feldherr,» *ZpGL*, 18, 1881, pp. 541–573.

55 Id., rev. *Geschichte des Preußischen Staatswesens vom Tode Friederichs des Großen bis zu den Freiheitskriegen*. Von Martin Philippson, *ZpGL*, 18, 1881, pp. 35–58. The book in question: Martin Philippson, *Geschichte des Preußischen Staatswesens vom Tode Friedrich des Großen bis zu den Freiheitskriegen*, 1, Veit, Leipzig 1880.

56 Hans Delbrück, «Friedrich der Große als Feldherr,» *cit.*, pp. 544, 556–558.

57 *Ibid*., pp. 555, 568, 572.

and France, which further protected their protégé. Although an open statement against Delbrück likely would not have been considered as an attack on Friedrich, it was unclear how closely the prince's tutor's views aligned with the Crown Prince's. In the latter case, too much criticism could incur the future emperor's wrath upon the careless officer. It was safer to exercise restraint and avoid damaging one's future career by "disciplining" an unknown historian.

Delbrück had the backing of Schlichting, who was the commander of the Guard Corps (Gardekorps) in Berlin from 1878 to 1884.[58] Even after Delbrück left the imperial court, the two maintained a correspondence, demonstrating their mutual respect, if not sympathy.[59] Years later, Delbrück praised the general's broad horizons.[60] Due to his position, Schlichting was part of Friedrich's inner circle and served under him in the Franco-Prussian War.[61] Delbrück had the opportunity to consult with the group gathered around the Crown Prince and learn from its members.[62] It is worth noting that Delbrück's first article on military history was likely influenced by his conversations with Friedrich.[63]

In 1882, Taysen published another work on the importance of the Seven Years' War in developing Prussian strategic thought. In the new book, he defended the idea of a direct link between Moltke's successes and Friedrich II's military legacy.[64] The following year, Colonel Rudolf von Caemmerer (1845–1911) published a commentary on the Prussian strategic plan from 1757, viewing it as

58 Wolfgang Petter, «Schlichting, Sigismund von,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 23, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 2007, p. 76.

59 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. IX.

60 Id., rev. E. Freiherr von Gayl, *General von Schlichting und sein Lebenswerk*. Berlin, 1913. Verlag: G. Stilke. 427 S., *PJ*, 151, 1913, pp. 342–347.

61 Wolfgang Petter, «Schlichting, Sigismund von,» *cit*., p. 76. Schlichting was then serving in the Fourth Upper Silesian Infantry Regiment (4. Oberschlesischen Infanterie-Regiment), which was part of the Sixth Corps, and this was part of the Third Army commanded by Friedrich: Wilhelm von Hahnke, *Die Operationen der III. Armee. Nach den Akten der III. Armee*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1873, p. 97.

62 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., p. LIV.

63 *Ibid*. Cf. Id., «Persönliche Erinnerungen an Kaiser Friedrich und sein Haus,» *PJ*, 62, 1888, pp. 111–114.

64 Adalbert von Taysen, *Zur Beurteilung des Siebenjährigen Krieges*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1882.

evidence of a "strategy of annihilation."[65] Both authors echoed Bernhardi's sentiments, but neither adequately considered the social composition of the Prussian Army, its logistical capabilities, nor the strategic role of fortresses. They believed in Friedrich II's revolutionary impact on the art of war through sheer willpower, ultimately breaking with the strategic patterns of the Enlightenment.

Through his work on two volumes of Gneisenau's biography, Delbrück became familiar with the role of the Military Reorganization Commission, which was led by Scharnhorst. He also learned about its influence on Clausewitz. Given Clausewitz's emphasis on the significance of Napoleonic strategy, Delbrück struggled to accept the idea of maintaining the military model of Friedrich II. In 1884, Delbrück revisited Bernhardi's book, recognizing its influence on subsequent publications. He compared it with the works of Taysen and Caemmerer. The result was another call to study historical phenomena in context and reject the idea of Friedrich II's abandoning the "strategy of attrition" for the "strategy of annihilation."[66]

Until then, ignoring Delbrück as a civilian lacking military knowledge had served its purpose. Despite his collective review of the works of Bernhardi, Taysen, and Caemmerer appearing in the esteemed journal *Historische Zeitschrift*, few academics have been absorbed by tracking the debates concerning the method of studying Prussian military history. Meanwhile, representatives of the military historical service maintained the direction of their publishing work, paying little attention to the critical opinions expressed by the newly appointed private docent with the rank of reserve lieutenant.

Lieutenant Colonel Dobrogost von Malachowski (1852–1903) made a breakthrough in the military historical service's attitude when he published an article in 1884 on the fundamental principles of warfare employed by Friedrich II.[67] He

65 Rudolf von Caemmerer, *Friedrichs des Großen Feldzugplan für das Jahr 1757*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1883.

66 Hans Delbrück, rev. *Friedrich der Große als Feldherr*. Von Theodor v. Bernhardi. Zwei Bände. Berlin, Mittler & Sohn. 1881; *Zur Beurteilung des Siebenjährigen Krieges*. Von A. v. Taysen. Berlin, Mittler & Sohn. 1882; *Friedrichs des Großen Feldzugsplan für das Jahr 1757*. Vortrag, gehalten zur Feier des Geburtstages Friedrichs des Großen in der Militärischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin von Cämmerer. Berlin, Mittler & Sohn. 1883, *HZ*, 52, 1, 1884, pp. 155–159.

67 Dobrogost von Malachowski, «Die methodische Kriegführung Friedrichs des Großen,»

mentioned Delbrück's "clumsy attempts" to instruct military experts, provoking Delbrück's reaction.[68] His polemic did not contain any new content compared to his earlier publications criticizing the "general staff perspective," but he soon realized that it was insufficient to explain how military history should not be written—instead, an example of the correct method should be provided to show "historians in military uniforms" where the source of their mistakes lies.

This marked the beginning of Delbrück's publishing offensive. First, he wrote an article on how to study military history according to academic standards.[69] Then, he prepared a commentary on the Prussian campaign plan of 1757.[70] Finally, he compared Friedrich II's strategy to Napoleon's.[71] The latter study, in particular, was perceived as highly controversial because the King of Prussia was depicted as a classic representative of the "strategy of attrition," while the ruler of the French was portrayed as a practitioner of the "strategy of annihilation." The article clearly suggested the fallacy of seeing Friedrich II as Moltke's direct inspiration. Rather, Moltke's strategy stemmed from a creative adaptation of the French system of warfare. Thus, Delbrück crossed the line between historical dispute and attacking the authority of the Great General Staff.

The "father of military history" summarized Clausewitz's views on strategy, further fueling animosity. His work clearly showed that the Prussian general did not consider Friedrich II to be as significant as Napoleon in terms of strategic innovations. Clausewitz saw Friedrich II as a representative of an earlier ("pre-modern") era of military history.[72] In 1888, Delbrück provided a broader justification of his position,[73] gaining him his first ally in the fight to establish

Grenzboten, 43, 1884, pp. 211–220.

68 Hans Delbrück, «Die methodische Kriegführung Friedrichs des Großen,» *PJ*, 43, 1884, pp. 195–212.

69 Id., «Etwas Kriegsgeschichtliches,» *PJ*, 60, 1887, pp. 606–633.

70 Id., Über den Feldzugsplan Friedrichs des Großen im Jahre 1757, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1887.

71 Id., «Über die Verschiedenheit der Strategie Friedrichs und Napoleons,» in Id., *Historische und politische Aufsätze*, Walther & Apolant, Berlin, 1887, pp. 227–305.

72 Id., «General von Clausewitz,» in Hans Delbrück, Peter Paret, *Krieg, Geschichte, Theorie. Zwei Studien* über *Clausewitz*, ed. Peter Paret, Miles, Norderstedt 2018, pp. 21–40 (the article was originally published in 1887).

73 Id., «Ein Beitrag zur Beurteilung der Kriegführung Friedrichs des Großen,» *JdAM*, 66, 1888, pp. 69–90; Id., 1888d, «Zur friderizianischen Strategie,» *JdAM*, 67, 1888, pp. 220–221.

General Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849–1930).

military history as an academic specialty: Heinrich Friedjung.[74]

A year later, Delbrück took it a step further and published an article in which he used two historical examples from different eras to explain the "strategy of annihilation" and the "strategy of attrition" to members of the military historical service. He also indicated how to identify both strategies based on an analysis of available sources.[75] He chose Pericles (c. 495–429 BCE) and Friedrich II. This was also an expression of Delbrück's typical ironic display of superiority. The article was a preliminary study for a broader project: a monograph on the same topic.[76] Delbrück even titled one of its chapters *Friedrich der Große als Feldherr. Eine methodologische Parodie*, in which he showed how absurd conclusions could be reached by consistently applying the "general staff perspective."[77]

Most representatives of the military historical service misunderstood the semi-jocular formula.[78] Intervention with the Prussian Minister of Culture was even required to clarify how Delbrück was awarded his habilitation.[79] Some were outraged by the monograph due to its departure from the prevailing convention, while others doubted the author's intentions. Delbrück began with a joke at the expense of officers dealing with issues related to Friedrich II, unaware of the drastically changing atmosphere.

As early as 1888, Emperor Friedrich III passed away. He had been favorable toward Delbrück, but his successor, Wilhelm II, was indifferent to his subsequent fate. In 1890, the first part of the first volume of the monumental work *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen* was published under the auspices of the War History Department.[80] Bernhardi was sent to the Department shortly thereafter

74 Heinrich Friedjung, «Der Streit über Friedrich den Großen als Feldherrn,» *Die Gegenwart*, 33, 1888, pp. 100–104.

75 Hans Delbrück, «Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen,» *PJ*, 64, 1889, pp. 258–305, 450–486, 503–528.

76 Id., *Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen*, Reimer, Berlin 1890.

77 *Ibid*., pp. 30–47.

78 Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 97.

79 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., p. 497.

80 Grossen Generalstab, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*, 1, 1, *Der erste Schlesische Krieg 1740–1742*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1890.

and remained there until the end of 1891.[81] According to his memoirs, he had a decisive influence on the Great General Staff's subsequent historical work.[82]

This is how the official interpretation of the Silesian Wars emerged. Its influence was incomparably greater than any article's or review's. Moreover, individuals seeking fundamental information about Prussian military actions during the Enlightenment period were not primarily seeking a "methodological parody." The publication of the book explained the military historical service's silence for several years and immediately put Delbrück in a difficult position. It did not change with the publication of Lieutenant Colonel Max Jähns, who supported some of Delbrück's interpretations.[83] The two authors actually conversed about some historical issues, leading to a further convergence of their positions.[84]

A counteroffensive has begun against the rebellious scholar. Bernhardi played a key role in it. First, he published a work on the influence of Friedrich II on modern warfare.[85] Then, he published a pamphlet aimed directly at Delbrück. The pamphlet was intended to introduce Delbrück to the fundamentals of strategy and Clausewitz's perspective on the Prussian way of war.[86] In Bernhardi's opinion, the decisive factor in Friedrich II's use of a "strategy of annihilation" was his initiation of offensive actions. Bernhardi also took a jab at Delbrück in the title, writing about the "glimpses" (*Streiflichter*) of his knowledge. There, Bernhardi also nicknamed Delbrück a "civil strategist" (*Zivilstratege*), a moniker that stuck with the "father of military history" for years to come.

A series of articles signed with initials appeared in the press, ridiculing the civilian historian's attempts to lecture the officers of the Great General Staff. Delbrück was urged to either change his area of interest or abandon scholarship

81 Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, *cit.*, pp. 120, 132; Walther Hubatsch, «Bernhardi, Friedrich von,» in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 2, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1955, p. 122; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., p. 190.

82 Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, *cit*., p. 126.

83 Max Jähns, *Geschichte der Kriegswissenschaften*, 3, Oldenbourg, München–Leipzig 1891.

84 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., p. 498.

85 Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Das Studium der Friderizianischen Kriege in seiner Bedeutung für die moderne Kriegskunst*, „Militär-Wochenblatt" Bh., Berlin 1892.

86 Id., *Delbrück, Friedrich der Große und Clausewitz. Streiflichter auf die Lehren des Professor Dr. Delbrück über Strategie*, Leist, Berlin 1892.

entirely.[87] His polemical temperament led him to respond with the pamphlet. In it, he denied Moltke the title of Friedrich II's successor. He also reiterated Napoleon's pivotal role in creating the "strategy of annihilation," rendering the proclamation of the "eternal superiority" of Prussian strategic thought unjustifiable. Moltke defeated the French with their own weapons.[88]

The attacks against Delbrück intensified. In addition to being accused of dilettantism, he was now also accused of lacking patriotism. The focus of the debate shifted from Friedrich II to Clausewitz and Moltke. This shift was provoked by Moltke's interview and the difficulty of correctly interpreting the assumptions of the Military Reorganization Commission's reformers.

Bernhardi was supported by Generals Wilhelm von Scherff (1834–1911)[89] and Albert von Boguslawski (1834–1905).[90] Scherff admitted academic scholars the right to write about military history, yet he believed in officers' superiority over civilians. Soon after, Bernhardi declared the triumph of professionalism over the impulses of a civilian lacking specialized knowledge.[91] Considering the Danes' defeat in 1864 and their distance from Prussian military culture, it is no wonder that the favorable opinion of Delbrück expressed by a Danish captain went virtually unnoticed.[92]

Two more parts of the first volume of *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen* were published in 1893.[93] The new books generally adopted the same interpretive direction as Bernhardi's earlier work.[94] Delbrück chose not to respond, knowing

87 Compiled by: Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., pp. 151–152.

88 Hans Delbrück, *Friedrich, Napoleon, Moltke. Ältere und neuere Strategie. Im Anschluß an die Bernhardische Schrift »Delbrück, Friedrich der Große und Clausewitz«*, Walther, Berlin 1892.

89 Wilhelm von Scherff, *Delbrück und Bernhardi. Eine strategische Clausewitz-Studie für Gelehrte und Militairs*, Bath, Berlin 1892.

90 [Albert] von Boguslawski, «Die Strategie in verschiedener Beleuchtung,» *National-Zeitung*, 12, 3, 1892, pp. 1–3.

91 Friedrich von Bernhardi, «Leserbrief zum Streit über die strategische Theorie und Praxis Friedrichs des Großen,» *Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 65, 1892, pp. 6–7.

92 [Victor] Dalhoff-Nielsen, «Zur Strategie Friedrichs des Großen als Feldherr,» *JdAM*, 82, 1892, pp. 127–135.

93 Grossen Generalstab, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*, 1, 2–3, *Der erste Schlesische Krieg 1740–1742*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1893.

94 For years, Bernhardi insisted that he was the sole author of the second part of the first volume

it would be impossible to address such a vast amount of material in a single review. The second volume was soon published in three parts.[95] It seemed the matter had been settled in favor of the War History Department, and Delbrück's attempt to introduce an academic perspective had been effectively suppressed, deterring potential imitators. Delbrück was left to face the Great General Staff alone.

The Great General Staff officers' attitude toward Delbrück was reminiscent of Cadet Biegler's perception in Jaroslav Hašek's (1883–1923) novel.[96] They thought they were dealing with an unfulfilled reserve officer who was so arrogant as to dare lecture men who were more educated and experienced. Convinced that knowledge of contemporary strategic variations was the key to understanding eighteenth-century wars, they disregarded the historical context, promoting a vision of universal principles of warfare and the decisive importance of the commander's will.

Bernhardi's joy over the victory was premature. In 1896, Delbrück published an article pointing out a consequential oversight made by the War History Department. He addressed the influence of political objectives on the conduct of war and the adopted strategy. These objectives were not adequately included in *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*. Readers might have gotten the impression that Friedrich II's military triumphs were solely the result of tactical superiority.[97] According to Delbrück, a poor understanding of political and economic history distorted how his opponents viewed the problem. He believed that grasping the complexity of the past was crucial to studying military history. Therefore, he decided to demonstrate how the military and political-economic spheres interact

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of *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*: Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, *cit*., pp. 126–127.

95 Grossen Generalstab, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*, 2, 1–2, *Der zweite Schlesische Krieg 1744–1745*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1895; Eid., *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*, 2, 3, *Der zweite Schlesische Krieg 1744–1745*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1896. One of the main authors of the second and third parts was Freytag-Loringhoven, who played a significant role in the second stage of the conflict: [Hugo] von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Menschen und Dinge*, *cit*., p. 76.

96 Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Schweik and His Fortunes in the Great War*, Doubleday & Company, New York 1963, pp. 348–349, 350–353, 360–361.

97 Duffy, an admirer of Bernhardi's work, made the same mistake: Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: A Military Life*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London–New York 1985.

using the Seven Years' War as an example. The 1756–1763 war was to be the subject of the third volume of *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*.[98]

The "civilian strategist" delivered an unparryable blow to the military historical service. He successfully demonstrated unsupported, a priori assumptions on which the other side based its arguments during the "strategy dispute." In contrast, he advocated for a "strategy of attrition" based on primary source data regarding the diplomatic position and potential of Friedrich II's state on the eve of the war. The controversy with Delbrück exposed the potentially dangerous way of strategic thinking of some Great General Staff officers. Relying solely on military strength was not promising for Germany in the event of a prolonged armed conflict, which actually broke out in 1914.

As previously mentioned, essential changes occurred in the military historical service in 1896, when the War History Department split into two independent units. The newly established First Department dealt with contemporary conflicts and drew inspiration from sources other than Friedrich II's campaigns. It is unclear whether Schlieffen's decision was influenced by Delbrück's studies, as such changes are usually planned far in advance. Regardless of whether the Berlin professor's publication influenced the designation of separate research areas for the Departments, its conclusions remained consistent with the direction of the implemented reforms. Starting in 1896, Moltke's wars became the sole model for current strategic analyses.

Schlieffen's decision marked Delbrück's first tangible success, though it was not his doing. Friedrich II and, to a lesser extent, Clausewitz were no longer directly tied to the Prussian victories of 1864–1871. Years later, Bernhardi considered the "cult of Clausewitz" to be one-dimensional. He concluded that Clausewitz should not play a leading role in shaping current analyses.[99] Bernhardi soon returned to military historical service and became head of the First Department in 1898.[100] His return was significant because the Second Department was responsible for ongoing research on Friedrich II's campaigns, which

98 Hans Delbrück, «Friedrich der Große und der Ursprung des Siebenjährigen Krieges,» *PJ*, 84, 1896, pp. 32–53.

99 Friedrich von Bernhardi, *On War of To-Day*, 2, *cit*., pp. 92–93.

100 Walther Hubatsch, «Bernhardi, Friedrich von,» *cit*., p. 122; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., p. 66; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 53.

aligned with Bernhardi's area of interest. Meanwhile, in 1896, Colonel Stanislaus von Leszczynski (1842–1932),[101] who was in conflict with Bernhardi, was appointed head of the Second Department. The nomination of Leszczynski, who was a supporter of Delbrück's historical ideas,[102] seemed like an attempt to quell the "strategy dispute" and signal a shift in the interpretive paradigm.

4.3. The second stage of the conflict (1896–1920)

Organizational changes within the Great General Staff's structure limited the activity of the military historical service for a period of time. Not until 1899 was a source publication annotated with commentary published, presenting Friedrich II's views on the conduct of war between 1745 and 1756. The Second Department officers who created the publication worked under Leszczyński's direction.[103] For the first time in the history of the Great General Staff, Delbrück was openly acknowledged to be right in his assertion that a "strategy of annihilation" could not be applied to eighteenth-century warfare conditions. Napoleon was recognized as a real innovator, independent of Friedrich II. The most intense stage of the "strategy dispute" had almost ended, resolving in favor of Delbrück. The reaction of the First Department, which dealt with conflicts involving Moltke, was still pending. However, it never came.

Jähns shared his thoughts on the new book soon. In his review, he questioned the one-dimensional portrayal of Friedrich II's strategy. His main concern was the potential evolution of Prussian strategic assumptions. Although Friedrich II initially aimed to end wars with decisive battles, his strategy actually became an example of a "strategy of attrition." Jähns therefore tried to nuance the arguments of the officers of the Second Department.[104] His opinion is all the more valuable because he was a highly regarded historian and professional officer

101 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., p. 191; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 53 (incorrectly as "Lesczynski").

102 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., p. 126.

103 Grossen Generalstab, *Friedrichs des Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege in ihrer Entwicklung von 1745–1756*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1899.

104 Max Jähns, rev. *Friedrichs des Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege in ihrer Entwicklung von 1745–1756*. Von R. v. Caemmerer. Berlin, Wilhelm Baensch. 1904. 213 S., *Militär-Wochenblatt*, 85, 4, 1900, coll. 59–64.

who bridged both fields.

The second review was clearly critical. Its author, General Erich von Witzleben (1847–1919), was another researcher who equated Moltke's strategy with the strategy of Friedrich II, thereby denying Napoleon's groundbreaking achievements in the process. Nevertheless, even Witzleben admitted that Friedrich II's views on strategy were not as clear-cut as he initially thought.[105]

The Second Department's next publication was a book about the tactical training of eighteenth-century Prussian infantry. Unlike Delbrück's works, it contained no polemical content.[106]

The first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* went on sale in 1900. In it, Delbrück discussed various types of strategy and used the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War as an example, making a direct reference to his 1890 book.[107] In the introduction, he alluded to his nickname, the "civilian strategist," and emphasized his sole goal of promoting a better understanding of history, without any ambition to instruct contemporary military planners.[108] He did not highlight the dispute with the War History Department; rather, he focused on the transformations occurring in ancient military affairs.

The first three parts of the third volume of *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*, dedicated to the Seven Years' War, were published in 1901.[109] The text incorporated Delbrück's interpretations and minimized the influence of Bernhardi's books. Freytag-Loringhoven was the primary author of the second and third parts.[110] He was not uncritical of Delbrück's work—claiming that the Berlin professor confused types of wars with types of strategies[111]—but he did not display any hostility toward Delbrück. If he took a different stance, it was not motivated

105 Erich von Witzleben, «Charakteristische Merkmale der Kriegführung Friedrichs des Großen, Napoleons und Moltkes,» *Deutsche Revue*, 27, 2, 1902, pp. 225–233.

106 Grossen Generalstab, *Die taktische Schulung der preußischen Armee durch König Friedrich den Großen während der Friedenszeit 1745 bis 1756*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1900.

107 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 139–150.

108 *Ibid*., p. LVI.

109 Grossen Generalstab, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*, 3, 1–3, *Der Siebenjährige Krieg 1756–1763*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1901. Subsequent volumes were published until 1914, but the project was not completed, as the last part published (the thirteenth) ends in 1760.

110 [Hugo] von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Menschen und Dinge*, *cit*., p. 92.

111 *Ibid*., p. 95.

by personal animosity. In 1901, Schlieffen removed Bernhardi from his position as head of the First Department due to their growing conflict. Freytag-Loringhoven then took over his duties.[112] Given the obligation to consult with the heads of both Departments on all works prepared by officers, the further changes introduced by Schlieffen effectively excluded Bernhardi from future discussions.

For military institutions based on the principle of hierarchical subordination, changing the perception of the nature of the Prussian strategy was relatively easy. However, civilian authors who had previously supported the "strategy of annihilation" theory remained on the battlefield. Retracting their views would have undermined their academic standing, even though the interpretive turnaround had already placed them at a disadvantage. Paradoxically, Delbrück's victory in his struggle with the military historical service prompted academic researchers who had not been directly involved in the conflict to take action. They were defending their credibility, even though their belief in the unprecedented nature of Friedrich II's military actions was based on uncritical faith in the findings of "historians in military uniforms."

Another revival of the "strategy dispute" occurred in 1904. Koser published the first volume of Friedrich II's biography. In terms of military issues, it reiterated Bernhardi's interpretations from 1881 but did not include the Second Department's view from 1899.[113] Simultaneously, Koser published his study of the strategies employed by the Prussian king during the Seven Years' War. Although it was essentially an elaboration on the theme presented in the second volume of the biography,[114] Koser attacked Delbrück by name, provoking a response.[115] The polemic was continued throughout the rest of 1904 and did not lead to a rapprochement of positions. In Koser's view, given the unfavorable international situation, Friedrich II had to plan for a quick end to the war, which could only be achieved through the "strategy of annihilation." In contrast, Delbrück claimed that the King of Prussia and his opponents lacked the means to do so, rendering such considerations unrealistic. The participants in the dispute remained almost

112 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., p. 190; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 53

113 Reinhold Koser, *König Friedrich der Große*, 1, Cotta, Stuttgart 1904.

114 *Ibid*., 2, Cotta, Stuttgart 1908.

115 Id., «Die preußische Kriegführung im Siebenjährigen Kriege,» *HZ*, 92, 2, 1904, pp. 239–273.

deaf to each other's arguments. One positive aspect of the dispute, however, was its purely academic nature, free from any assessment of Moltke.[116]

In the same year, Cammaerer published a book about the evolution of strategic concepts in the nineteenth century.[117] The book's central argument was an attempt to demonstrate the continuity of Prussian thought, which Napoleon only slightly improved upon. Caemmerer rejected Delbrück's work, earning him a negative review from the "father of military history."[118] Undeterred, Cammaerer published a short work on Clausewitz the following year, presenting him as the intellectual architect of Moltke's victories.[119]

Although officers from the Great General Staff briefly joined the discussion, they did not delve into the era of Friedrich II. Instead, they focused on Clausewitz. Freytag-Loringhoven questioned the possibility of interpreting two types of strategies from *Vom Kriege*, denying the likelihood of their existence in pure form. According to him, history has been dominated by a combination of a "strategy of attrition" and a "strategy of annihilation," a fact Clausewitz was aware of.[120] Goltz held a more traditional view, believing that Clausewitz wrote solely about the "strategy of annihilation," which Moltke correctly understood and successfully applied against the Austrian and French armies.[121] Delbrück had nothing new to contribute, so he refrained from starting a new debate. The Second Department's official position most likely influenced his stance on the matter.

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116 Hans Delbrück, «Ein Nachwort zu Kosers Aufsatz über Friedrichs des Großen Kriegführung,» *HZ*, 93, 1, 1904, pp. 66–70; Id., «Zur Kriegführung Friedrichs des Großen. Ein zweites Nachwort,» *HZ*, 93, 3, 1904, pp. 449–456; Reinhold Koser, «Zur Geschichte des preußischen Feldzugplans vom Frühjahr 1757,» *HZ*, 93, 1, 1904, pp. 71–76; Id., «Zusatz,» *HZ*, 93, 3, 1904, pp. 456–458.

117 Rudolf von Caemmerer, *Die Entwicklung der strategischen Wissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert*, Baensch, Berlin 1904.

118 Hans Delbrück, rev. *Entwicklung der strategischen Wissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert*. Vom v. Caemmerer, Generalleutnant. Berlin 1904. Wilhelm Baensch. 213 S., *PJ*, 115, 1904, pp. 347–351.

119 Rudolf von Caemmerer, *Clausewitz*, Baensch, Berlin 1905.

120 [Hugo] von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Die Macht der Persönlichkeit im Kriege. Studien nach Clausewitz*, Mittler und Sohn, Berlin 1905, pp. 365–366.

121 Colmar von der Goltz, «Karl von Clausewitz,» *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshef*, 19, 9, 1905, pp. 324–336.

General Hugo von Freytag-Loringhoven (1855–1924).

The last attempt to challenge Delbrück's interpretation came in the form of an article published in 1912 by Major Curt Jany (1867–1945). Jany served in the Second Department from 1901 to 1906 and again from 1908 to 1914.[122] In the article, Jany characterized Friedrich II as the supreme commander.[123] Jany rejected Delbrück's findings from the outset, supporting the King of Prussia's strategy of destroying the enemy through decisive battles.[124] Jany specialized in the organizational changes of the Prussian Army up to 1815 and was not accustomed to taking such a confrontational stance as Bernhardi and Goltz did.[125] The text was published in an internal military journal, and the cultural form of the polemic led Delbrück to decide not to respond, especially since Jany based his work on the findings of other authors and did not introduce new themes into the discourse. Delbrück did not mention Jany at all in his 1920 summary of the "strategy dispute," listing Caemmerer's book as the last important work.[126]

Bernhardi, the main polemicist against Delbrück, no longer participated in the "strategy dispute." His removal from military historical service greatly limited his writing activity. In his memoirs, he continued to criticize both Schlieffen[127] and Delbrück, accusing them of arrogance. He saw himself as one of the foremost authorities on strategy and was offended by any questioning of his views.[128]

The "strategy dispute" resurfaced after World War I when emotions surrounding it subsided, memories of the military historical service's "capitulation" faded, and discussions about the causes of the 1918 defeat inflamed public opinion. Otto Hintze was the first to revisit the topic of Friedrich II, publishing an extensive text about the king's "military testament" from 1768. Although Hintze indirectly contributed to the "strategy dispute" concerning the years 1914–1918, in which he initially unequivocally supported the political leadership of the mili-

122 Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab*, *cit*., pp. 74, 191.

123 Curt Jany, «Friedrich der Große als Feldherr,» *Militärwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, 23, 1912, pp. 164–170.

124 *Ibid*., pp. 164–165.

125 Hans Umbreit, «Von der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung,» *cit*., p. 41 (list of publications).

126 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., p. 501.

127 Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, *cit*., p. 255.

128 *Ibid*., pp. 126, 133, 143.

tary and the annexationists,[129] the core of his arguments was a refreshing of Taysen's partially outdated views.[130] In his response to Hintze, Delbrück could use an additional argument in the form of the Second Department's official position from 1899. Delbrück did not hesitate to call Hintze out, accusing him of stirring up artificial controversies and disregarding the variability of Prussian strategy, which was dictated by different assessments of the state's military potential over more than one hundred years.[131]

Hintze accused Delbrück of misunderstanding Clausewitz's arguments, yet he acknowledged the possibility of employing different types of strategies at various stages of a war. Ultimately, Hintze sided with both Delbrück and his opponents in the "strategy dispute" and stated that further insistence on a single interpretation is unjustified. However, he remained silent again about the position of the Second Department from 1899, as well as subsequent publications issued by the Second Department.[132]

General Max von Szczepanski (1867–1949) joined the discussion as well, supporting Hintze. He expressed the view on the necessity of reading Clausewitz's ideas through the context of Moltke's style of command. He considered Delbrück's writings to be proof of a misunderstanding of military specifics and a failed attempt to impose an interpretation contradicting centuries of Prussian

129 Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Musterschmidt, Göttingen 1969, pp. 50, 116. The evolution of his political views toward a position similar to Delbrück's is dated to 1917.

130 Otto Hintze, «Friedrich der Große nach dem Siebenjährigen Kriege und das Politische Testament von 1768,» *FbpG*, 32, 1920, pp. 1–56. He previously mentioned Friedrich II's "strategy of annihilation" in: Id., *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk. Fünfhundert Jahre vaterländischer Geschichte*, Parey, Berlin 1915, p. 357. However, he did not elaborate on the position he had adopted at that time, settling for a general statement.

131 Hans Delbrück, «Auseinandersetzung mit Hintze,» *FbpG*, 33, 1920, pp. 412–417. Confirmation of the validity of the objections raised by Delbrück is: Jacek Jędrysiak, *Prussian Strategic Thought*, *cit*., pp. 180–448. The fundamental mistake made by the proponents of the "strategy of annihilation" was assuming that the Prussians absolutized offensive actions and that the concepts of defensive war were only marginally reflected in the prepared plans. The example of the years 1815–1830 indicates exactly the opposite situation.

132 Otto Hintze, «Delbrück, Clausewitz und die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen. Eine Erwiderung,» *FbpG*, 33, 1920, pp. 131–177.

military tradition.[133] Both Delbrück and Hintze agreed to remain silent about Szczepanski's article.

In 1920, the fourth and the final volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* was published. Delbrück's new book included separate chapters dedicated to the strategies of Friedrich II and Napoleon.[134] Forty-two years after it began,[135] Delbrück summarized *Strategiestreit*, unequivocally taking the position of Moltke's inspiration by Napoleonic strategy.[136] The "strategy dispute" was no longer an interesting topic for him, which is why he did not elaborate on his earlier theses. He limited himself to reiterating his previous claims, adding content only from works published after 1914 in a few specific instances.

Following Delbrück's death in 1929, his opponents felt emboldened to disparage the Berlin professor's achievements more openly. Their activity became particularly evident after 1933, when an essential political shift occurred, favoring individuals with a worldview diametrically opposed to Delbrück's.[137] While Eberhard Kessel upheld academic standards by repeating Hintze's arguments with slight modifications,[138] other texts were clearly written to discredit Delbrück rather than address his findings. An even more dangerous phenomenon was the silence of Delbrück's adversaries, which was intended to create the impression of incompatibility of his work with historiographical progress. Their method was quite effective, as evidenced by the number of postwar publications referencing Hintze's 1920 article but not mentioning the 1899 study prepared by the Second Department. Some authors cite the position of the military historical service only insofar as it aligns with their views, creating a distorted picture of the course of the "strategy dispute."[139]

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133 Max von Szczepanski, «Hans Delbrück und Karl von Clausewitz,» *Deutsche Revue*, 45, 1, 1920, pp. 14–21.

134 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., pp. 374–409, 481–495, 550–589.

135 *Ibid*., pp. 495–501.

136 *Ibid*., [pp. IX–X].

137 Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik*, *cit*., pp. 151–155.

138 Eberhard Kessel, «Doppelpolige Strategie. Eine Studie zu Clausewitz, Delbrück und Friedrich dem Großen,» *Wissen und Wehr*, 12, 1931, pp. 623–631; Id., «Zum Problem des Wandels der Kriegskunst vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert,» *Wissen und Wehr*, 120, 1939, pp. 100–110.

139 E.g., Werner Hahlweg, *Carl von Clausewitz*, *cit*.; Id., «Krieg – Kriegskunst – Kriegstheorie,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 313–335; Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the*

The efforts of Delbrück's opponents do not change the far-reaching consequences of *Strategiestreit*. An academic historian dared to openly challenge the establishment that monopolized the study of military history. He was not eliminated from the discourse and even successfully promoted his interpretations. The criticism he received was rarely about the substantive aspects of his work but rather about his civilian status. It was as if the value of his work depended primarily on the author's profession rather than on its content.[140] Officers who opposed Delbrück believed they were defending the honor of the Prussian Army and resisting civilian interference in military affairs. In 1896, the military historical service's helplessness in the face of Delbrück was fully revealed, although he had already exposed his opponents' weakness with a "methodological parody" six years earlier. The "strategy dispute" demonstrated civilian researchers' ability to debate with "historians in military uniforms," as well as the superiority of the academic model of studying military history over the traditionally used patterns.

The military historical service's approach and research methods simply could not keep pace with the evolution of academic historiography. The methodological backwardness left them unable to solve purely historical problems.[141] Read-

Great, *cit*.

140 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1972, p. 175; Arden Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment*, *cit*., pp. 37–38; Id., «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *cit*., p. 518; Id., «Introduction,» *cit*., pp. 14–15, 17; Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück,» *cit*., pp. 341–343; Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der ›Strategiestreit‹*, *cit*., p. 40; Gerd Krumeich, «Militärgeschichte für eine zivile Gesellschaft,» in Christoph Cornelissen (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaften. Eine Einführung*, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 185–186; Ralf Pröve, «La nouvelle histoire militaire de l'époque moderne en Allemagne. Approches, problèmes et perspectives,» in André Corvisier, Dumitru Preda (ed.), *Guerre et société en Europe. Perspectives et nouvelles recherches*, Europa Nova, Bucarest 2004, p. 232; Craig Stockings, «German Influences on the Evolution of Strategic Thought,» *Australian Defence Force Journal*, 174, 2007, p. 98; Martin van Creveld, *The Changing Face of War: Combat From the Marne to Iraq*, 2nd ed., Presidio, New York 2008, pp. 13–14; Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion. Hans Delbrück und der Krieg in der Geschichte,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, pp. XI, XX.

141 Michael Salewski, «Zur preußischen Militärgeschichtsschreibung im 19. Jahrhundert,» in Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt (ed.), *Militärgeschichte in Deutschland und Österreich von 18. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, Mittler, Bonn 1985, p. 65; Antulio J. Echevarria II, «Heroic History and Vicarious War,» *cit*., p. 587.

ing sources in context requires different skills than writing regimental histories and analyzing recently concluded conflicts. Speaking out on the issue of Friedrich II with only a superficial knowledge of Enlightenment Prussia was bound to clash with the dominant academic perspective sooner or later. Delbrück was tasked with this challenge. However, Hintze's and Kessel's papers did not fully align with the oversimplified claims present in works written by officers either.

In 1920, Delbrück was informed about the informal banning of his students from work at the War Academy and the silencing of his supporters in both War History Departments.[142] For the officers of the Great General Staff, the Berlin professor's critical comments from 1914–1918 were a new and unforgivable insult. Disputes about Friedrich II were less significant than demonstrating the institution's incompetence between 1916 and 1918, which culminated in Delbrück's open attack on Ludendorff. While the military historical service's goodwill toward Delbrück ended in 1918, the Great General Staff's policy change was a direct consequence of his political stance and had nothing to do with his historiographical work.

142 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. X].

Chapter 5

Delbrück's influence on the evolution of military historiography

5.1. Antiquity (until 476 AD)

Although he was not a formal classicist, Hans Delbrück had the greatest impact on classical studies (*Altertumswissenschaft*). Karl Christ (1923–2008) ranked Delbrück among the eleven most influential scholars of ancient history working before 1945.[1] Classicists primarily engaged in discussions about Delbrück's proposed historical analysis method, while authors dealing with other eras generally focused on detailed interpretations.

The usefulness of *Sachkritik* was fully revealed in relation to antiquity, leading to the verification of data regarding army numbers, the influence of terrain on the course of battles, and the dependence of military systems on the socio-economic base. Delbrück often cited Karl J. Beloch, a social historian specializing in demography, as his main inspiration.[2] Delbrück greatly admired the method advocated by Beloch, who described the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte* as one of the most insightful books on antiquity.[3]

Some researchers were aware of the limitations of an overly one-sided ap-

1 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1972, pp. 159–200.

2 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. LV; *ibid*., 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, [p. X].

3 Karl J. Beloch, rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. Von Hans Delbrück. I. Teil. *Das Altertum*. 2. neu durchgearbeitete und vervollständigte Auflage. Berlin, Georg Stilke. 1908. XIV u. 608 S., *HZ*, 104, 2, 1910, p. 344.

proach. Classical philologists and professional officers typically failed to analyze issues of ancient military history. In 1852, Wilhelm Rüstow and Hermann Köchly (1815–1876) wrote in the introduction to their jointly authored book that combining both perspectives made it possible to address the interpretive problems concerning Greek military history.[4] Delbrück proved to be the solution to Rüstow and Köchly's postulate.

Initially, Delbrück's success was not guaranteed. When he presented Theodor Mommsen with the first volume of his *magnum opus* in 1900, Mommsen thanked him but said he was unlikely to find the time to read it.[5] Mommsen's skepticism was evident as early as 1881, when he headed the habilitation committee at the University of Berlin and initially refused to process Delbrück's application. In Mommsen's opinion, military history was not and should not become an academic specialty.[6] The reserve shown by the most famous researcher of antiquity may have influenced how Delbrück's achievements were perceived in the future. Tadeusz Zieliński (1859–1944) noted that Mommsen's views were often treated like an oracle by many German scholars and could determine the academic status of an author, especially since Mommsen's students and collaborators held many prominent positions.[7] Furthermore, Mommsen consistently blocked Beloch's academic career,[8] which may have contributed to negative feelings toward Delbrück.

However, the early interactions between Mommsen and Delbrück did not

4 Wilhelm Rüstow, Hermann Köchly, *Geschichte des griechischen Kriegswesens von der ältesten Zeit bis auf Pyrrhos*, Verlags-Comptoir, Aarau 1852, s. VI.

5 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. X].

6 See pp. 38–39.

7 Tadeusz Zieliński, *Autobiografia. Dziennik 1939–1944*, ed. Hanna Geremek, Piotr Mitzner, DiG, Warszawa 2005, pp. 65–66. See also Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 104–105; Id., *Römische Geschichte und deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft*, Beck, München 1982, p. 73; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen. Eine Biographie*, Beck, München 2002, pp. 137, 143; Id., *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike. Eine wechselvolle Beziehung*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 2021, pp. 82–83, 94–96, 110.

8 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., p. 254; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack. Wissenschaft und Politik im Berlin des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1997, pp. 103–106; Id., *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., pp. 161–162; Id., «Beloch, Karl Julius,» in Peter Kuhlmann, Helmuth Schneider (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly*, Suppl. 6, *History of Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2014, p. 34.

have serious repercussions. Within a short time, Delbrück gained a following among German-speaking scholars, though not necessarily among classicists. His relationship with Mommsen also had normalized, and the two historians grew closer through political initiatives.[9] In 1900, when an English journalist wanted to interview Mommsen about the Second Boer War (1899–1902), Delbrück facilitated the contact.[10] Delbrück also delivered a eulogy in honor of the first Nobel Prize-winning historian at the unveiling of his Berlin monument in 1909.[11]

Over time, a lot of university lecturers, high school teachers, and military officers followed in Delbrück's footsteps. An interesting aspect of this phenomenon was the surprisingly harmonious collaboration among all groups, a characteristic trait of studies on ancient militaries.[12] One possible explanation is the high status of ancient cultures in German education and public life.[13] None of the officers could rival the authority of scholars such as Barthold G. Niebuhr (1776–1831), Mommsen, Beloch, or Eduard Meyer, which was widely acknowledged and never questioned. Much credit goes to the high status of academic philology, as knowledge of classical languages and source studies was fundamental to researching antiquity.[14] Not even the best mastery of military skills could replace academic scholarship.

The prominent role of *Altertumswissenschaft* sparked a surge of interest in

9 See pp. 63–65.

10 Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., pp. 394, 491, 495; Id., *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., p. 214.

11 *Ibid*., p. 225.

12 Michał N. Faszcza, «Narodziny „polskiej szkoły" historii militarnej a wojskowość antyczna. W poszukiwaniu tożsamości badawczej (część 2),» *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, 22, 1, 2023, pp. 135–138. Mommsen's attitude may have influenced harmonious collaboration to some extent. He was accustomed to treating officers with full respect and expected the same from other scholars in his presence: Stefan Rebenich, *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., p. 211.

13 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 1–3; Hermann Bengtson, *Einführung in die Alte Geschichte*, 8. Aufl., Beck, München 1979, pp. 1–3; Luciano Canfora, *Ideologie del classicismo*, Einaudi, Torino 1980, pp. 32–35; Stefan Rebenich, *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., pp. 12–13.

14 Luciano Canfora, *Ideologie del classicismo*, *cit*., pp. 37–38; Karl Christ, *Klios Wandlungen. Die deutsche Althistorie vom Neuhumanismus bis zur Gegenwart*, Beck, München 2006, pp. 20–21; Stefan Rebenich, *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., pp. 41–45.

Delbrück's theories. Consequently, there was an "explosion" of publications on ancient military history, most of which focused on the campaigns and military institutions of ancient Rome. The most significant findings were made by Theodor Steinwender (1845–1918),[15] Alfred von Domaszewski (1856–1927),[16] Johannes Kromayer (1859–1934) and Colonel Georg Veith (1875–1925),[17] Robert Grosse (1880–1968),[18] and Friedrich Lammert (1890–1956).[19] All of them relied on Delbrück's findings to a greater or lesser extent. It is equally important to note that their focus on military issues was made possible precisely because the

15 Steinwender never wrote a monograph summarizing his research, being satisfied with publishing a series of minor papers: Theodor Steinwender, *Die Marschordnung des römischen Heeres zur Zeit der Manipularstellung*, Kafemann, Danzig 1907; Id., «Der Polybianische Gefechtsabstand,» *Hermes*, 44, 2, 1909, pp. 179–197; Id., «Zur Schlachtordnung der Manipulare,» *RhM*, 65, 1910, pp. 130–148; Id., «Zum Polybianischen Feldlager,» *RhM*, 67, 1912, pp. 48–66; Id., «Zur Kohortentaktik,» *RhM*, 70, 1915, pp. 416–440.

16 Main work: Alfred von Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres*, Marcus und Weber, Bonn 1907.

17 Kromayer and Veith are primarily known for their series of atlases intended for studying the course of ancient wars, containing extensive historical commentary, often polemical in tone toward Delbrück's findings. Some parts were prepared jointly, while others were attributed to only one of the authors. The immense amount of work required for their preparation, as well as the problem of financing the project after the end of World War I, meant that individual volumes were published between 1903 and 1931. Additionally, Kromayer and Veith, with the help of other scholars, comprehensively developed the history of Greek and Roman warfare: Johannes Kromayer, Georg Veith, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung der Griechen und Römer*, Beck, München 1928. Both also published studies on other topics, although in Kromayer's case (Johannes Kromayer, *Roms Kampf um die Weltherrschaft*, Teubner, Leipzig 1912; Id., *Drei Schlachten aus dem griechisch-römischen Altertum*, Teubner, Leipzig 1921), they resonated less than Veith's work (Georg Veith, *Geschichte der Feldzüge C. Julius Caesars*, Seidel, Wien 1906; Id., «Die Taktik der Kohortenlegion,» *Klio*, 7, 1907, pp. 303–334; Id., *Der Feldzug von Dyrrhachium zwischen Caesar und Pompejus*, Seidel, Wien 1920). Kromayer and Veith are considered the most important continuators of Delbrück's work, while also being his ardent critics. In the 1928 synthesis written with Veith, Kromayer plagiarized the work of Adolf Bauer (1855–1919). Kromayer tended to cite Bauer only when highlighting differences in opinion (Roel Konijnendijk, «Who Wrote Kromayer's Survey of Greek Warfare?,» *History of Classical Scholarship*, 2, 2020, pp. 1–17; Id., *Between Miltiades and Moltke: Early German Studies in Greek Military History*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2022, pp. 64–65), which makes the discovery even more shocking. Kromayer's attitude may have been influenced by Bauer's support for Delbrück (see *ibid*., p. 71).

18 Main work: Robert Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Weidmann, Berlin 1920.

19 Main work: Friedrich Lammert, *Die römische Taktik zu Beginn der Kaiserzeit und die Geschichtsschreibung*, *Philologus* Splb. 23, 2, Leipzig 1931.

"father of military history" had paved the way.

The acceptance of military history in the field of ancient studies stemmed from two factors: the earlier exploration of such issues within political history and the limited participation of professional officers in classical studies. Unlike in other eras, officers did not claim the right to shape the discourse. A sensitivity to the specifics of ancient cultures led to the acceptance of Delbrück's idea that military history should be understood within the context of the factors determining the daily lives of past societies. It is difficult to imagine researching Rome, Sparta, or Macedonia without considering military matters, even in the most basic sense, regardless of one's specialty. While some contemporary scholars attempt to overlook the military aspect of ancient history, all ancient historiographical works address war to varying degrees. Marginalizing military history would be equivalent to marginalizing issues vital to the Greeks and Romans themselves.[20]

Delbrück's innovative approach to studying military history attracted criticism, especially early in his academic career. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, antiquity was widely idealized, as the earliest eras were treated as worthy models for individual attitudes and principles of collective life. Some older faculty members viewed classical philologists as the only qualified individuals to study ancient history, including military matters, in an attempt to discredit Delbrück.[21] However, his disputes with classicists were immeasurably less intense than those with members of the military historical service.

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the "Prince of Philologists" (*princeps*

20 Luciano Canfora, «La guerra e la pace nell'antichità,» in Id., *Una società premoderna. Lavoro, morale, scrittura in Grecia*, Dedalo, Bari 1989, pp. 26–27; Christian Meier, «Die Rolle des Krieges im klassischen Athen,» *HZ*, 251, 3, 1990, pp. 555–563; Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare del mondo antico. Prospettive retrospettive*, Jovene, Napoli 2006, p. 21; Simon Hornblower, «Warfare in ancient literature: the paradox of war,» in Philip Sabin, Hans van Wees, Michael Whitby (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, 1, *Greece, the Hellenistic world and the rise of Rome*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 22, 52.

21 Karl Christ, «Einleitung zum Nachdruck der dritten Auflage von 1964,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. 698; Roel Konijnendijk, *Between Miltiades and Moltke*, *cit*., pp. 74–77.

philologorum) and privately Mommsen's son-in-law,[22] described Delbrück's interpretations of Greek military affairs as "heresies," contradicting the content of the surviving accounts.[23] Wilhelm Soltau (1846–1924), who undoubtedly knew more about military matters than Wilamowitz-Möllendorff did, agreed with him.[24] The next researcher to oppose Delbrück's views was Meyer. He was hostile to Delbrück and his ideas for both substantive[25] and political reasons. Meyer was an open supporter of a nationalistic movement closely associated with the Pan-German League.[26] Although Meyer and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff

22 Ludo M. Hartmann, *Theodor Mommsen. Eine biographische Skizze*, Perthes, Gotha 1908, p. 80; Lothar Wickert, *Theodor Mommsen. Eine Biographie*, 3, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1969, p. 242; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, *cit*., p. 393; Id., *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., pp. 205–206; William M. Calder III, «Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Ulrich von,» in Peter Kuhlmann, Helmuth Schneider (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly*, Suppl. 6, *History of Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2014, p. 661.

23 Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen*, 2, Weidmann, Berlin 1893, p. 85. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff had an aversion to Delbrück since their time studying together in Bonn, which may have influenced his critical opinion of Delbrück. However, the close family ties between Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Mommsen limited criticism of Delbrück's actions due to their shared political activities. The doyen of German classicists and the rebellious military historian primarily collaborated on political initiatives.

24 Wilhelm Soltau, rev. Hans Delbrück, *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege. Zwei combinierte kriegsgeschichtliche Studien nebst einen Anhang über die römische Manipulartaktik*. Berlin, Walther u. Apolant, 1887. VIII u. 314 S., *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 9, 1888, coll. 176.

25 Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 3, 1, *Das Perserreich und die Griechen. Bis zu den Friedensschlüssen von 448 und 446 vor Christ*, Cotta, Stuttgart 1901, pp. VIII–IX; Id., «Organisation und Taktik des Manipularheeres nach Polybios,» in Id., *Kleine Schriften*, 2, Niemeyer, Halle 1924, p. 196.

26 Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 324–332; Bernd Sösemann, «"Der Kühnste Entschluss führt am sichersten zum Ziel". Eduard Meyer und die Politik,» in William M. Calder III, Alexander Demandt (ed.), *Eduard Meyer. Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers*, Brill, Leiden 1990, pp. 467–469, 477–482; Burkhard Meissner, «Meyer, Eduard,» in Peter Kuhlmann, Helmuth Schneider (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly*, Suppl. 6, *History of Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2014, p. 412; Stefan Rebenich, *Die Deutsche und ihre Antike*, *cit*., pp. 161–162. Meyer was particularly active as a publicist during World War I, including comparing the Germans to the Romans and their opponents to the Carthaginians, which was intended to give the impression of a "clash of civilizations": Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Musterschmidt, Göttingen 1969, pp. 27–28, 32, 53–54, 131.

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1941).

were in an academic dispute for a number of years,[27] they agreed on the issue of Delbrück's proposed methods for studying military history, considering *Sachkritik* unacceptable.

Unable to disregard the opinions of widely respected academics, Delbrück included numerous excursions in subsequent editions of the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, in which he explained his reasoning and addressed the content of the polemics. The polemical parts of his work may seem tedious today, but they served their purpose. Over time, acceptance of *Sachkritik* gradually increased, and the view of the credibility of ancient authors began to be viewed differently.[28]

Delbrück engaged in the most intense polemics with Kromayer.[29] Their disputes tarnished both scholars' reputations because they often resorted to *ad hominem* arguments. The dispute centered on Kromayer's relationship to *Sachkritik*. This episode is substantial because it resolved the controversy surrounding the interpretation of ancient sources using Delbrück's method.

The conflict began with Kromayer's negative review of the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, published in 1900. Kromayer's most significant accusations concerned Delbrück's alleged subjectivity[30] and reductionism in

27 William M. Calder III, «"Credo gegen Credo; Arbeit gegen Arbeit; Anschauung gegen Anschauung". Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff contra Eduard Meyer,» in William M. Calder III, Alexander Demandt (ed.), *Eduard Meyer. Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers*, Brill, Leiden 1990, pp. 41–73; Burkhard Meissner, «Meyer, Eduard,» *cit*., p. 411.

28 A significant portion of the criticism directed at Delbrück stemmed from his questioning of deeply ingrained beliefs, causing its intensity to gradually decrease after the initial shock wore off: Roel Konijnendijk, *Between Miltiades and Moltke*, *cit*., p. 73.

29 Its course was described in a slightly different way by: *ibid*., pp. 71–92. I lean toward the interpretation found in: Karl Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, *cit*., pp. 176–178. Konijnendijk presented the thesis, which requires further in-depth research, that Kromayer was made a "tool" to combat Delbrück by classical philologists centered around Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Meyer. However, Konijnendijk's view seems very likely.

30 Johannes Kromayer, rev. Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. 1. Theil: *Das Alterthum*. Berlin, Georg Stilke, 1900. XV u. 533 S., *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 21, 1900, coll. 3186–3187, 3191. Similarly: Benedikt Niese, rev. Delbrück, H., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. 1 Theil. *Das Alterthum*. Berlin 1900. Georg Stilke. XV 533 S., *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 163, 1, 1901, pp. 597–598.

estimating the number of ancient combatants.[31] On the other hand, Kromayer recognized the validity of conducting field studies,[32] a method for which he would soon become famous thanks to his management of a large-scale project organized with the support of figures such as Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.[33] Kromayer would soon point out the lack of field studies to Delbrück.[34]

The second objection raised by Kromayer (i.e., Delbrück's unjustified reductionism) may be omitted without further comment. He quickly accepted the findings of the "father of military history," thereby modifying his earlier position. The situation was different with *Sachkritik*. Kromayer accused Delbrück of using it as a weapon against polemicists to highlight the lack of military knowledge among academics and the lack of historical knowledge among officers.[35] Although it must be admitted that shortcomings were evident in both groups,[36] Kromayer's observation is valid.

Kromayer rejected the idea of applying modern military experiences to the ancient world.[37] According to him, the only way to draw accurate conclusions was to combine classical philology with field studies.[38] He identified with scholars who viewed antiquity as an idealized era, when people were guided by nobler motives and could more easily overcome their limitations. Delbrück dismissed Kromayer's perspective with an ironic comment and did not even mention him by name, suggesting that he had little understanding of *Sachkritik*.[39]

In his review of the second volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, Beloch supported the idea of *Sachkritik* despite his friendship with Meyer (who was

31 Johannes Kromayer, rev. Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, *cit*., coll. 3187–3188.

32 *Ibid*., coll. 3191.

33 Roel Konijnendijk, *Between Miltiades and Moltke*, *cit*., p. 81.

34 Johannes Kromayer, «Die Schlacht von Sellasia und die historische Kritik des Polybius,» *Jahrbuch des kaiserlichen Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, 15, 1900, pp. 209–210.

35 Id., «Wahre und falsche Sachkritik,» *HZ*, 95, 1, 1905, p. 7.

36 Richard Glover, «War and Civilian Historians,» *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 18, 1, 1957, p. 84.

37 Johannes Kromayer, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Griechenland. Bausteine zu einer antiken Kriegsgeschichte*, 1, Weidmann, Berlin 1903, pp. 14–15; Id., «Wahre und falsche Sachkritik,» *cit*., p. 4.

38 Id., *Antike Schlachtfelder*, *cit*., pp. 1–2.

39 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [p. IX].

hostile toward Delbrück),[40] as well as his disapproval of the aggressive nature of the polemic between Delbrück and Kromayer. In Beloch's opinion, philologists tend to prioritize sources over real-life conditions and treat literary images as superior to common sense.[41] In his review of the second edition of the first volume, Beloch emphasized the difficulty of revising previously held beliefs, particularly for experienced and respected scholars. Unfortunately, Delbrück's new interpretations forced them to relearn.[42] Despite his sometimes unjustified sense of superiority, Delbrück's work drew attention to the primacy of narrative schemes over the assumed reality of the descriptions included in ancient sources. Today, his idea may be common knowledge, but at the time, it aroused widespread indignation.

Kromayer's position did not sufficiently consider the human factor, which is a key aspect of the "new military history" today. Like any historian, Delbrück could be mistaken about some details. However, literary accounts that align with the results of field studies are insufficient for properly addressing the issue, contrary to Kromayer's assumption. His conviction is untenable given the recognition of psychophysical and cultural factors, which are often overlooked in ancient sources. Physical and emotional limitations undoubtedly influenced soldiers' behavior. Soldiers were not mere pawns on a map, moved according to a commander's will. Delbrück's analysis of the Battle of Marathon proved him right, even if it required rejecting much of Herodotus of Halicarnassus' account.[43] Critics of Delbrück were partly right to point out the weakness of

40 William M. Calder III, «"Credo gegen Credo,» *cit*., p. 41.

41 [Karl J.] Beloch, rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. Von Hans Delbrück. 2. Teil. 1. Hälfte. *Römer und Germanen*. Berlin, Georg Stilke. 1901. 231 S., *HZ*, 89, 1, 1902, *cit*., p. 76; Id., rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. Von Hans Delbrück. Zweiter Teil – zweite Hälfte. *Völkerwanderung*. Übergang ins Mittelalter. Berlin, Georg Stilke. 1902, *HZ*, 91, 3, 1903, *cit*., p. 498. Similarly: Id., rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1910, *cit*., p. 344.

42 *Ibid*.

43 Hans Delbrück, «Neues aus Marathon,» *HZ*, 65 (3), 1890, pp. 465–468; Id., «Marathon und die persische Taktik,» *Klio*, 17, 1921, pp. 221–229; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 58–82. Interest in the Battle of Marathon remains strong, as evidenced by the numerous studies dedicated to it. The main point of reference currently is the vision presented by: Peter Krentz, *The Battle of Marathon*, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 2010. It is worth noting that this view is considered to be just as innovative as Delbrück's was over hundred years ago. However, the advancement of science has caused the work of the "father of mili-

Sachkritik based on extratextual knowledge, analogies, intuitions, and experiences without a universal dimension. Delbrück's problem was his difficulty in demonstrating the validity of his method. For many polemicists, a lack of direct source reference meant the end of the discussion. The aforementioned Battle of Marathon is a clear example of achieving better results through a general knowledge of human endurance and performance rather than the naïve assertion that the Athenian soldiers were inspired by Artemis and thus capable of performing impossible feats (see Wilamowitz-Moellendorff).

Delbrück's attitude has contributed to the questioning of some ancient authors' credibility. Such criticism shocked many classicists who interpret sources from an idealistic point of view using only the philological method (*Wortkritik*).[44] Polybius of Megalopolis (c. 200–c. 118 BCE) is a notable example; his accounts are still commonly accepted uncritically today.[45] The second round of the debate between Delbrück and Kromayer focused precisely on Polybius. The pretext was the analysis of the Battle of Sellasia (222 BCE). Based on his field studies, Kromayer criticized Delbrück for inaptly applying *Sachkritik*. In Kromayer's opinion, Delbrück formed his view without first examining the battlefield.[46] Delbrück responded with two articles pointing out the unoriginality and internal contradictions in Kromayer's conclusions about the course of the battle. More accusations followed. Kromayer's biggest flaw was supposed to be his forced attempt to align Polybius' account with the topography, which amounted to blatant manipulation. Kromayer intended the entire discussion only to demonstrate the accuracy of Polybius' description, and, as such, it was meant solely to defend "philological orthodoxy."[47]

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tary history" to be seen as… traditionalist.

44 Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 330.

45 I presented my viewpoint on Polybius' knowledge of military affairs in: Michał N. Faszcza, «Armia rzymska… ale jaka? O wiarygodności uwag Polybiosa z Megalopolis na temat organizacji *exercitus Romanus*,» *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 66, 3, 2018, pp. 43–63. Before Delbrück, the excessive trust placed in Polybius' account was called into question by: Karl J. Beloch, rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1910, *cit*., p. 344.

46 Johannes Kromayer, «Die Schlacht von Sellasia,» *cit*.; Id., *Antike Schlachtfelder*, *cit*., pp. 199–280.

47 Hans Delbrück, «Theologische Philologie,» *PJ*, 116, 1904, pp. 209–240; Id., «Theologische

Eduard Meyer (1855–1830).
(The University of Chicago Photographic Archive, Creative Commons NC, https://storage.lib.uchicago.edu/ucpa/series1/derivatives_series1/apf1-04470r.jpg)

Kromayer replied, attempting to convince Delbrück of a better understanding of *Sachkritik* than… its author.[48] Interestingly, the initial opponent of *Sachkritik* began discreetly using and modifying it without admitting Delbrück was right.[49] Kromayer was not the only one, though. *Sachkritik* became the foundation for the academic study of military history, which was Delbrück's quiet victory. After World War II, it provided the impetus for the emergence of the "new military history."

The third encounter between the two authors, which occurred in the 1920s, did not carry the same weight as the previous ones. A new dispute was sparked by their differing interpretations of Roman strategic concepts. Kromayer, who usually wrote about different subjects, stood little chance in the polemic with Delbrück.[50] Kromayer soon took a conciliatory stance,[51] though the bitterness from the subsequent barbs exchanged between the two scholars remained. To make matters worse, Kromayer plagiarized Delbrück's work in 1928.[52]

The dominance of German-speaking scholars in the field of ancient military studies was significantly undermined by the Nazi regime's rise to power and the subsequent decision to eliminate military history research units from German universities after 1945.[53] Consequently, there was a break in continuity and a

Philologie: ein Nachtrag,» *PJ*, 121, 1905, pp. 158–167.

48 Johannes Kromayer, «Wahre und falsche Sachkritik,» *cit*., pp. 5–7.

49 Noah Whatley, «On the Possibility of Reconstructing Marathon and Other Ancient Battles,» *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 84, 1964, p. 126.

50 Johannes Kromayer, «Waren Hannibal und Friedrich der Große wirklich Ermüdungsstratege?,» *HZ*, 131, 3, 1925, pp. 393–408; Id., «Antwort,» *HZ*, 132, 3, 1925, pp. 449–450; Hans Delbrück, «Zu Kromayers neuer Theorie der Strategie,» *HZ*, 132, 3, 1925, pp. 447–449.

51 Johannes Kromayer, Georg Veith, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung*, *cit*., pp. 147–162.

52 Roel Konijnendijk, «Who Wrote Kromayer's Survey,» *cit*., p. 4. In Kromayer's case, this was not the first such abuse. Regarding another plagiarism, see n. 17.

53 Carl H. Hermann, *Deutsche Militärgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1966, pp. 1–2; Wolfgang von Groote, «Militärgeschichte,» *MZ*, 1, 1, 1967, p. 5; Ursula von Gersdorff, «Einführung,» in Ead. (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 7–8; Bernhard R. Kroener, «Vom »extraordinary Kriegsvolck« zum »miles perpetuus«. Zur Rolle der bewaffneten Macht in der europäischen Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit. Ein Forschungs- und Literaturbericht,» *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, 43, 1988, pp. 145–146; Ralf Pröve, «La nouvelle histoire militaire de l'époque moderne en Allemagne. Approches, problèmes et perspectives,» in André Corvisier, Dumitru Preda (ed.), *Guerre et société en Europe. Perspectives et nouvelles recherches*, Europa Nova, Bucarest 2004, p. 233.

shift in center of gravity to Great Britain and the United States. The low level of German language proficiency in these countries resulted in the establishment of new authorities and the need to address fundamental issues anew. The only permanent German research unit dealing with military history is now the Center for Military History and Social Sciences (Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften). Until 2012, it was known as the Military History Research Office (Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt). Located in Potsdam, the Center is subordinate to the German Army. Once again, the study of military history in Germany is the domain of the military historical service and civilians associated with the army.[54]

In the first half of the twentieth century, leading British classicists widely used Delbrück' publications.[55] Over time, his influence began to wane, even in the tactical dimension of battle. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated by publications resulting from the growing interest in Roman military studies at British universities dating back to the 1960s, which were suppressed after 40 years for mostly ideological reasons.[56] Adrian K. Goldsworthy (1969–) was an exception. In his groundbreaking research, which incorporated findings from military psychology, Goldsworthy recognized Delbrück as the founder of the specialty and acknowledged the enduring value of his fundamental interpretations.[57] Nevertheless, Goldsworthy and Philip Sabin (1959–) seem to have contributed to the final dethronement of their German predecessor.[58] Their studies are now the

54 Gerd Krumeich, «Militärgeschichte für eine zivile Gesellschaft,» in Christoph Cornelissen (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaften. Eine Einführung*, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main 2000, p. 184; Ralf Pröve, «La nouvelle histoire militaire,» *cit*., p. 233.

55 E.g., Thomas Rice Holmes, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1911; H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1928; F. E. Adcock, *The Roman Art of War Under the Republic*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1940.

56 Simon James, «Writing the Legions: the Development and Future of Roman Military Studies in Britain,» *Archeological Journal*, 159, 2002, pp. 1–2. More generally: Id., *Rome & the Sword: How Warriors & Weapons Shaped Roman History*, Thames & Hudson, London 2011, pp. 9–10.

57 Adrian K. Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War 100 BC–AD 200*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996, pp. 7–8.

58 Philip Sabin, «The Mechanics of Battle in the Second Punic War,» in Tim Cornell, Boris Rankov (ed.), *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, Institute of Classical Studies, London 1996, pp. 59–79; Id., «The Face of Roman Battle,» *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 90, 2000, pp. 1–17.

primary point of reference in discussions about Roman tactics.

Even before 1939, two main trends emerged among Italian researchers. Gaetano De Sanctis (1870–1957) was the creator of the first one. He held Delbrück's work in high regard and often referred to it when analyzing various aspects of warfare, though frequently in a polemical manner. In his multi-volume, monumental history of Rome, Delbrück is one of the most frequently cited scholars of military issues, second only to Mommsen.[59] Plinio Fraccaro (1883–1959) took a different stance. Fraccaro questioned the accuracy of Delbrück's reconstruction of the Roman military organization during the Early and Middle Republic,[60] as well as the tactics employed by legions. He also showed no interest in *Sachkritik*.[61]

Emilio Gabba (1927–2013), one of the postwar icons of Italian historical studies and a student of Fraccaro, took the middle ground. As early as the late 1940s and early 1950s, Gabba honored the achievements of Delbrück while emphasizing the classical status of De Sanctis' and Fraccaro's works,[62] thereby elevating them to the rank of creators of the "Italian School" of research on Roman military affairs. This situation persists today and often results in a better understanding of the classics in Italy than in other European countries.[63]

In France, Jacques Harmand (1918–1992) was the first to give Delbrück high status. Harmand specialized in the Roman military history of the Late Republic period.[64] Before World War II, no French historian could be considered a precur-

59 Gaetano De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani*, 2, *La conquista del primato in Italia*, Bocca, Milano–Torino–Roma 1907, pp. 194, 198, 201, 204, 394; *ibid*., 3, 1, *L'età delle guerre puniche*, Bocca, Milano–Torino–Roma 1916, pp. 379–380; *ibid*., 3, 2, *L'età delle guerre puniche*, Bocca, Milano–Torino–Roma 1917, pp. 19, 83–84, 96, 137, 142, 144–153, 161–166, 320, 323, 498–499, 531, 593–594, 605–606, 609.

60 Plinio Fraccaro, «La battaglia di Zama,» in Id., *Opuscula*, 1, *Scritti di carattere generale. Studi Catoniani. I processi degli Scipioni*, Athenaeum, Pavia 1956, pp. 328–336.

61 Id., «Il reclutamento nell'età repubblicana,» in Id., *Opuscula*, 4, *Della guerra presso i Romani*, Athenaeum, Pavia 1975, pp. 105–118.

62 Emilio Gabba, «Le origini dell'esercito professionale in Roma: i proletari e la riforma di Mario,» *Athenaeum*, 27, 1949, pp. 173–209; Id., «Ricerche sull'esercito professionale romano da Mario ad Augusto,» *Athenaeum*, 29, 1951, pp. 171–272.

63 The best example is the book: Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare*, *cit*.

64 Jacques Harmand, *L'armée et le soldat à Rome : de 107 à 50 avant notre ère*, Picard, Paris 1967.

sor to fully academic research on ancient militaries. After the war, the dominant model remained an open question.[65] Studies on the organization and internal relationships within the Roman armed forces soon gained popularity. Yann Le Bohec (1943–) became a leading representative, describing Delbrück's main work as "fundamental" and placing it alongside the synthesis of Kromayer and Veith.[66] French scholars' constant interest in the campaigns of Gaius Julius Caesar (100/102–44 BCE), to which the Berlin professor made undeniable contributions, seems to have influenced the popularity of Delbrück's books in certain circles.[67] François Cadiou (1971–) pointed out that at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Delbrück could only speculate about certain issues. However, verification of his ideas became possible only with the progress of research. The conclusions drawn from Cadiou's work are generally positive for the "father of military history."[68]

Delbrück's publications are valuable for understanding not only the wars fought by Julius Caesar but also the Battle of Cannae.[69] Substantial additions to Delbrück's findings are the topographic studies by Kromayer and Veith, which still remain essential today. When Gregory Daly (1975–) attempted to describe Cannae from the soldiers' perspective in the spirit of the "new military history," he found that Delbrück had devoted more attention to the topic than any other previous author. Unlike other historians of the nineteenth century, Delbrück

65 André Corvisier, «Aspects divers de l'histoire militaire,» *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 20, 1, Études d'histoire militaire (XVII^{e}–XX^{e} siècles), 1973, pp. 1–3; Laurent Henninger, «La nouvelle histoire-bataille,» *Espaces Temps*, 71–73, 1999, p. 44; Jean Delmas, «L'histoire militaire en France depuis 1945,» in André Corvisier, Dumitru Preda (ed.), *Guerre et société en Europe. Perspectives et nouvelles recherches*, Europa Nova, Bucarest 2004, p. 249. A clear commitment to academic military history, a critique of the "general staff perspective," and the historiographical distortions caused by German officers: Yvon Garlan, *War in the Ancient World: A Social History*, Norton & Company, New York 1975, pp. 19–20.

66 Yann Le Bohec, *La Guerre romaine 58 avant J.-C.–235 après J.-C.*, Tallandier, Paris 2014, pp. 30–31.

67 Karl Christ, *Caesar. Annäherungen an einen Diktator*, Beck, München 1994, pp. 261–264.

68 François Cadiou, *L'Armée imaginaire. Les soldats prolétaires dans les légions romaines au dernier siècle de la République*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2018, p. 47.

69 Hans Delbrück, «Die römische Manipulartaktik,» *HZ*, 51, 2, 1883, pp. 239–264; Id., «Die Manipularlegion und die Schlacht bei Cannae,» *Hermes*, 21, 1, 1886, pp. 65–90; Id., «Triarier und Leichtbewaffnete,» *HZ*, 60, 2, 1888, pp. 238–254; Id., «Die Schlacht bei Cannä,» *HZ*, 109 (3), 1912, pp. 481–507; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1, *cit*., pp. 364–392.

attempted to capture the rules of combat rather than merely reconstructing the sequence of events.[70]

In contrast, Delbrück's works on Greek military history quickly became outdated. The "*Annales* School" dominated with its focus on economic issues and then the history of mentalities, relegating the art of war to the margins for many years. Delbrück was cited by F. E. (Frank Ezra) Adcock (1886–1968),[71] W. Kendrick Pritchett (1909–2007),[72] J. K. (John Kinloch) Anderson (1924–2015),[73] and John F. Lazenby (1934–),[74] but he was almost absent in France and Italy. When interest in how battles were fought and the experiences of phalangites was revived based on the "new military history" phenomenon, few people consulted German works from the turn of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The low status of German classics was solidified by Hans van Wees (1958–), the foremost living expert on Greek military history. He was not accustomed to using the works of pre-war German authors, including Delbrück.[75]

Today, Delbrück is mentioned in papers on methodology and the history of historiography almost exclusively in the context of his affiliation with the group of German scholars who laid the groundwork for subsequent research.[76] His main contribution is widely regarded as his successful verification of the figures cited in ancient sources.[77] Perhaps recent publications by Roel Konijnendijk,

70 Gregory Daly, *Cannae: The experience of battle in the Second Punic War*, Routledge, London–New York 2002, especially pp. 114–115.

71 F. E. Adcock, *The Greek and Macedonian Art of War*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1957.

72 W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, 2–3, University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1974–1979.

73 J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon*, University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1970.

74 John F. Lazenby, *The Spartan Army*, Aris and Phillips, Warminster 1985.

75 Main work: Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities*, Bloomsbury, London–New York 2004.

76 E.g., Matthew Lloyd, Roel Konijnendijk, Cezary Kucewicz, «Introduction: Beyond the Phalanx,» in eid. (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Greek Land Warfare Beyond the Phalanx*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2021, pp. 3–4; Waldemar Heckel, F. S. Naiden, «Introduction,» in Waldemar Heckel et al. (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Warfare*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken 2021, p. 4; F. S. Naiden, «The Organization of Greek Armies,» in Waldemar Heckel et al. (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Warfare*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken 2021, p. 120.

77 *Ibid*., pp. 120–123.

which engage in constructive, non-condescending debate with the authors of German classics, will generate more interest in Delbrück's work.[78]

The increasing specialization of historical and philological research makes writing a comprehensive study of the military of the entire Greco-Roman world—in terms of both geography and culture—definitely more difficult. If such studies are published, they tend to be popular in nature and rarely stand the test of time. No contemporary work by one or two authors rivals the scope of the comprehensive studies of Delbrück, Kromayer, and Veith. However, Jon E. Lendon (1950–) made a vital contribution to our understanding of the fundamentals of ancient warfare.

In a sense, Lendon considered himself Delbrück's successor despite his reservations about the way Delbrück structured his narrative.[79] Lendon's attitude is noteworthy because it is rare nowadays. Yet, his book has become an important voice in what seems like an exhausted field. It demonstrates that constant methodological innovation is not necessary to produce tangible historical results. Lendon's focus on cultural and, to a lesser extent, social history builds directly on Delbrück's postulates, a fact of which Lendon is fully aware.

Historiography is not always approached in a purely academic manner. One specifically American phenomenon is portraying Delbrück as a German nationalist who endorsed war, colonialism, and aggressive international politics. Such a portrait reflects the propaganda brochures distributed in the United States to persuade American citizens to support entering World War I. Some of them contained manipulated fragments of speeches and publications by German politicians and intellectuals, including Delbrück.[80] Surprisingly, even after more than a hundred years, some brochures still influence perceptions of Imperial German culture despite their blatantly absurd content. For instance, they identify General Carl von Clausewitz as the ideological instigator of the 1914 occupation of

78 Roel Konijnendijk, *Classical Greek Tactics: A Cultural History*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2018; Id., *Between Miltiades and Moltke*, *cit*.

79 Jon E. Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 2005, p. 394.

80 E.g., *Germany's War Mania: The Teutonic Point Of View As Officially Stated By Her Leaders. A Collection of Speeches and Writings*, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York 1915, pp. 245–260.

Belgium.[81]

Such claims could be treated as a form of "intellectual folklore" were it not for the involvement of the renowned scholar of Greek military history, Victor D. Hanson (1953–). He gained fame for his controversial theory of the "Western Way of War."[82] While this is not the place to summarize the many years of often-heated debate on Hanson's theory, two aspects of his work should be highlighted. First, Hanson showed no interest in the relationship between the "strategy of attrition" and the "strategy of annihilation," forcing him to address uncomfortable questions from the outset. Second, the American historian consistently dismisses the works of authors who publish in languages other than English.

Although Hanson is not well-acquainted with German historiographical classics, as evidenced by his attributing claims not present in them to individual authors, failing to distinguish between Germans and Austrians, and making accusations of chauvinism and militarism, he did not actually fully discredit German-speaking scholars.[83] Hanson often views historical writing in terms of ideological struggle, resulting in strong political engagement and the publication of books whose sole purpose is to justify the military dominance of the Western world. However, "Westernness" has never been clearly defined, as evidenced by Greece, which is sometimes considered Western and sometimes Eastern.[84]

One of Hanson's "favorites" was Delbrück, who was portrayed as a man

81 *Ibid*., pp. 191–214.

82 Victor D. Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, 2nd ed., University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles 2009. The first edition of the book was published in 1989.

83 Id., «The Ideology of Hoplite Battle, Ancient and Modern,» in Id. (ed.), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, Routledge, London–New York 1993, p. 9; Id., «The modern historiography of ancient warfare,» in Philip Sabin, Hans van Wees, Michael Whitby (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, 1, *Greece, the Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 7–8; Id., *The Western Way of War*, *cit*., p. XXXV; Id., «The Hoplite Narrative,» in Donald Kagan, Gregory F. Viggiano (ed.), *Men of Bronze: Hoplite Warfare in Ancient Greece*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2013, p. 269.

84 Publication list: Victor Davies Hanson, https://www.hoover.org/profiles/victor-davis-hanson [10.06.2023]. Profile of historical and political journalism: The Blade of Perseus, https://victorhanson.com [10.06.2023].

driven by militarism and nationalism in his academic work. Furthermore, Delbrück was presented as an outdated historian by modern standards because he adhered to an archaic vision of historiography.[85] Hanson was often commissioned to write introductions and reviews of historiography, providing him with an exceptionally broad scope for expressing his views. The culmination of his historiographical studies is the chapter being included in the first volume of the highly prestigious *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*. It reveals the opinion on Delbrück's works: they did not stand the test of time, particularly when compared to Anglo-American publications rooted in democratic values.[86] Hanson never provided a shred of evidence to support his view. Even if the other authors involved in creating *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare* did not agree with its viewpoint, people seeking information about the evolution of historiographic discourse do not usually analyze the entire work. Instead, they settle for the chapter dedicated to their area of interest. The direct effect is the promotion of the sometimes bizarre claims and harmful cultural stereotypes (e.g., the nationalism and militarism of nearly all German scholars from the imperial era), which have little to do with academic rigor.[87]

One unique curiosity was Hanson's statement about the resurgence of interest in Delbrück's work. According to Hanson, it was due to the fact that a German historian from the 1990s was fluent in Latin, Greek, and several modern languages.[88] His statement reveals a shocking lack of knowledge about the European intellectual elite at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In reality, classical language proficiency among European academics was far greater than it is today.[89] The incident underscores the importance of younger re-

85 Victor D. Hanson, «The Ideology of Hoplite Battle,» *cit*., p. 9; Id., «The Status of Ancient Military History: Traditional Work, Recent Research, and On-Going Controversies,» *JMH*, 63, 2, 1999, p. 379; Id., «The modern historiography,» *cit*., pp. 7–8, 10–11, 20; Id., *The Western Way of War*, *cit*., p. XXXV; Id., «The Hoplite Narrative,» *cit*., p. 269.

86 Id., «The modern historiography,» *cit*., pp. 7–8, 10–11, 20. More generally: Id., *The Western Way of War*, *cit*., p. 379.

87 Disapproval of Hanson's arguments was also expressed by: Roel Konijnendijk, *Between Miltiades and Moltke*, *cit*., pp. 1–4.

88 Victor D. Hanson, «The Status of Ancient Military History,» *cit*., p. 399.

89 Everett L. Wheeler, «Greece: Mad Hatters and March Hares,» in Lee L. Brice, Jennifer T. Roberts (ed.), *Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World*, Regina Books, Claremont 2011, p. 58.

searchers learning languages other than English in order to independently verify opinions about classics of historiography.

The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World was published a few years after *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare* and was intended to compete with it. The editors of the Oxford volume, Brian Campbell (1949–) and Lawrence A. Tritle (1946–), summarized Delbrück's achievements in just one sentence, comparing them to the works of Johann G. B. Droysen as an example of nineteenth-century military writing that disregards social context.[90] Considering Delbrück's research postulates, their statement is yet another example of the unfamiliarity with his work.[91]

Hanson's ideologically charged stance is visible and influential yet still marginal among ancient historians. Both Lendon and Peter Krentz (1953–)[92] emphasize the need to refer to classical German interpretations from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without attributing to their authors attitudes that they did not actually hold. Everett L. Wheeler (1950–) consistently offered the strongest resistance to the politicization of scholarship, placing strong emphasis on source criticism. He considered the concepts of Goldsworthy and Hanson no less debatable than the allegedly outdated *Sachkritik* because they are based on not always justified analogies, as well as their unverifiable associations.[93] Wheeler expressed his appreciation for Delbrück and made his colleagues aware of the Berlin professor's introduction of cultural history. Admirers of the "cultural turn" mistakenly believe they have had a revolutionary impact on historiogra-

90 Brian Campbell, Lawrence A. Tritle, «Preface,» in Eid. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, p. XXX.

91 A sarcastic comment about editors' ignorance: Everett L. Wheeler, rev. *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World*. Edited by Brian Campbell and Lawrence A. Tritle. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xxxviii + 783, *Classical Journal*, 110, 2, 2015, p. 253.

92 Peter Krentz, «Hoplite Hell: How Hoplite Fought,» in Donald Kagan, Gregory F. Viggiano (ed.), *Men of Bronze: Hoplite Warfare in Ancient Greece*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2013, pp. 134–156.

93 Everett L. Wheeler, «Battles and Frontiers,» *Journal of Roman Archeology*, 11, 1998, pp. 647–649; Id., «Firepower: Missile Weapons and the "Face of Battle",» *Electrum*, 5, 2001, pp. 169–171, 174; Id., «The Modern Legality of Frontinus' *Stratagems*,» *MZ*, 43, 1, 2014, pp. 10–11; Id., «Introduction,» in Id. (ed.), *The Armies of Classical Greece*, 2nd ed., Routledge, London–New York 2016, p. XXII.

phy, as opposed to the traditional ("positivist") historiography inherited from before World War II.[94] Similarly, social factors were also present in Delbrück's historical research.[95] Acknowledging the principles of *Sachkritik*, Wheeler aptly described it as a fundamental research tool for which an even better alternative has yet to be found.[96]

Although Wheeler effectively counters Hanson among specialists, the readership of *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare* is much larger than that of academic journals. The niche nature of publications by scholars who are conscious of methodology and historiography does not bode well for the future, particularly with regard to shaping the views of new generations of classicists.

Even if knowledge of ancient military historiography were limited to reproducing cultural stereotypes, it would not diminish Delbrück's significant contribution to its development. Initially, *Sachkritik* was met with resistance, but it eventually evolved into the basis for ongoing research. Even Hanson, in his doctoral dissertation analyzing the impact of agriculture on warfare in the Greek world, unconsciously built upon the economic themes introduced to military history by Beloch and Delbrück.[97] Researchers specializing in Roman topics are more likely to recognize the influence of the classics. In this regard, the impact of the "*Annales* School" was less pronounced than in research on Greek topics. In any case, posterity resolved the twenty-eight-year conflict between Delbrück and Kromayer by granting them joint status as the most notable classicists focused on military history.[98]

94 *Ibid*., pp. XXVI–XXVII.

95 Id., «Greece: Mad Hatters and March Hares,» *cit*., p. 58; Id., rev. *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare*, *cit*., p. 263.

96 Id., «Firepower,» *cit*., p. 171; Id., rev. J. E. Lendon. *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. xiv + 468 pp. 10 maps. 31 black-and-white figs. Cloth, *American Journal of Philology*, 127, 2, 2006, p. 305; Id., «Greece: Mad Hatters and March Hares,» *cit*., p. 58; Id., «The Modern Legality,» *cit*., p. 10.

97 Victor D. Hanson, *Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece*, University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1983.

98 Beloch already pointed out their complementarity, despite the animosity between the two scholars: Karl J. Beloch, rev. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 1910, *cit*., p. 346.

5.2. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance (476–1648)

Charles Oman (1860–1946) was a polyhistor who specialized in military history. He is widely regarded as the British counterpart of Delbrück. Although he is best known for his research on the Napoleonic Wars, particularly the campaigns in the Iberian Peninsula from 1807 to 1814,[99] he also wrote extensively about the European art of war in the Middle Ages[100] and the sixteenth century.[101]

Oman came from an academic background and did not maintain close relations with the officer corps. Like Delbrück, he effectively advocated for purely academic research on military history, a field previously reserved for professional officers. Realizing Oman's vision was particularly difficult after 1918. He faced widespread reluctance to discuss military matters because it brought back memories of the recent traumas of World War I.[102] The specific perception of military service in British society, which does not affirm soldiering as a profession, could also have been a relevant factor.[103]

Oman had no military experience and was posted to the Foreign Office during World War I.[104] Although he did not believe military service was necessary for him, he observed basic errors made by civilian authors with naïve views about

99 Toward the end of his life, Oman cited the "Spanish epic" and a work on medieval military history as the books he held in the greatest affection: Charles Oman, *Memories of Victorian Oxford and of some early years*, Methuen & Company Ltd., London 1941, p. 157.

100 Id., *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century*, 1–2, Methuen & Company Ltd., London 1898. This book expands on an earlier, smaller study: Id., *The Art of War in the Middle Ages A.D. 378–1515*, Blackwell/Fisher Unwin, Oxford–London 1885.

101 Id., *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*, Methuen & Company Ltd., London 1937.

102 Bernard S. Bachrach, «Editor's Introduction,» *The Journal of Medieval Military History*, 1, 2002, pp. VII–VIII. An argument in defense of military history as a full-fledged specialty within universal history: Charles Oman, «A plea for military history,» in Id., *On the writing of history*, Dutton and Company, London 1939, pp. 159–175. Oman also criticized proponents of eliminating military history from academia, rhetorically asking whether fear of illness should justify the abolition of medicine?: Id., «A defence of military history,» in Id., *Studies in the Napoleonic Wars*, Methuen & Company Ltd., London 1930, p. 24; Id., «A plea for military history,» *cit*., pp. 159–160.

103 See Michael Howard, «Military History as a University Study,» *History*, 41, 141–143, 1956, p. 184.

104 Charles Oman, *Things I have seen*, Methuen & Company Ltd., London 1933, pp. 217–237.

the nature of war who misunderstood the subject matter.[105]

Since Oman's work on the Middle Ages was published in 1898, it could not have referred to Delbrück's findings, which occurred three years later. The second edition, published in 1924, contained some corrections, but the table of contents and emphasis remained unchanged. Oman did not seem to need to engage in debate with Delbrück or consider his arguments more broadly. The Berlin professor's arguments are based more on an analysis of socioeconomic issues, requiring access to a wider range of sources than Oman typically used.

Oman took a fairly traditional approach to the subject, focusing on changes in organization and armament, as well as the evolution of the art of war. His in-depth understanding of sources and the principles of their analysis set him apart from his predecessors, enabling him to draw novel conclusions. He did not pay much attention to the socio-political environment. Instead, he attributed success in battle to effective organizational models and tactics. His critical attitude toward the information in medieval accounts undoubtedly brought him closer to Delbrück. Medieval sources were created according to specific conventions and did not always accurately depict real events.[106] Delbrück took this idea further, making the deconstruction of established ideas a primary goal of his writing.

Oman's work on sixteenth-century military art was published nearly forty years later. By that time, he had become a more experienced and knowledgeable historian. He only mentions Delbrück in the chapter dedicated to mercenaries, describing the fourth volume of his *magnum opus* as "excellent."[107] Although Oman has a positive attitude toward Delbrück's work, he rarely references his publications. An analysis of Oman's book makes it difficult to determine whether he used Delbrück's work when writing individual chapters.[108] The two scholars had similar approaches to history, and the Berlin professor held his British counterpart in high regard.[109] Oman's caution in presenting Delbrück's

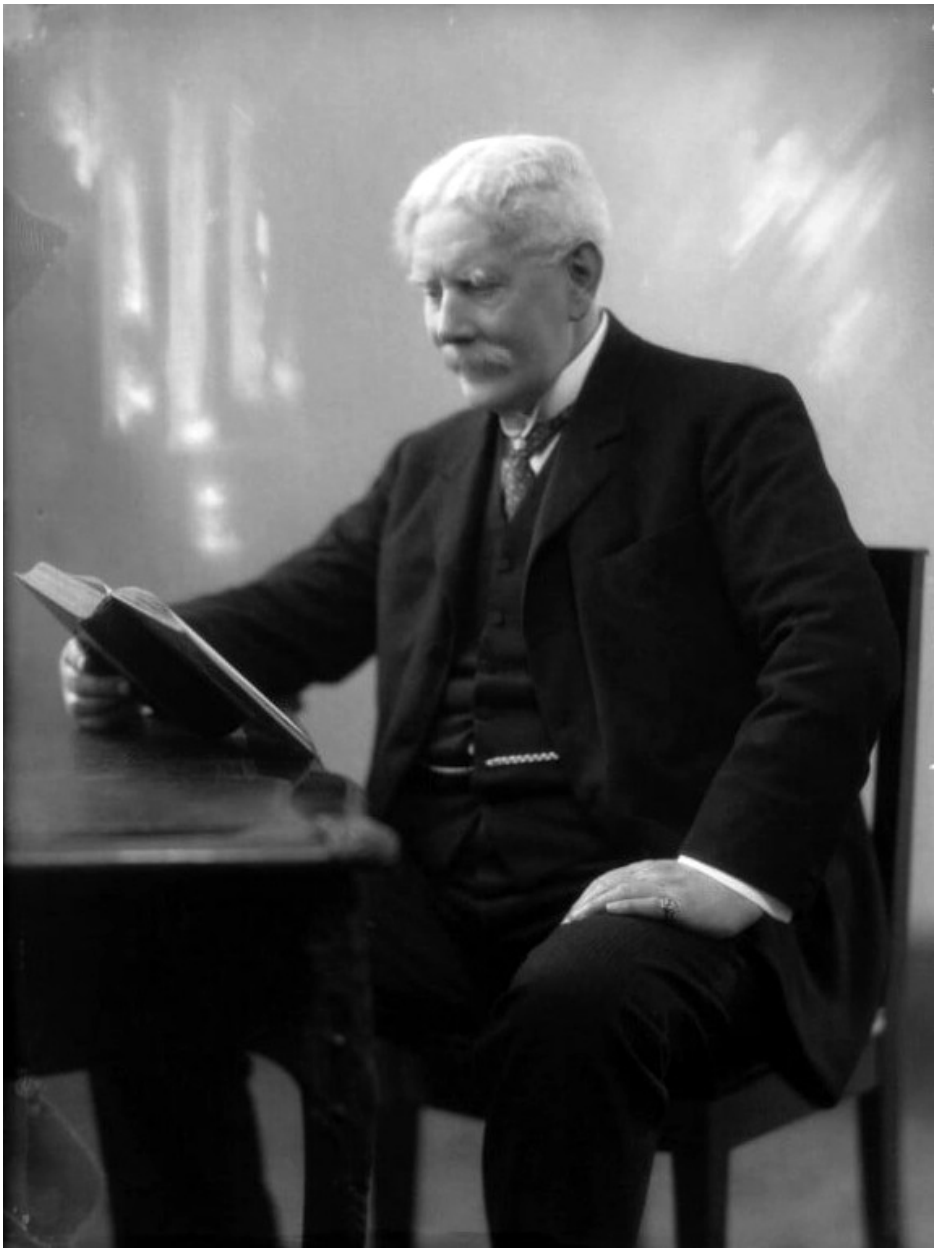
105 Id., «A plea for military history,» *cit*., pp. 170–174.

106 More broadly on Oman's approach to source analysis: *Ibid*., pp. 159–175.

107 Id., *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*, *cit*., p. 87 n. 1.

108 An affirmative response to this question indicates Oman's awareness of the ongoing debate in Germany concerning the similarities and differences between the strategies of Friedrich II and Napoleon: Id., *Inaugural Lecture on The Study of History Delivered on Wednesday, February 7, 1906*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1906, p. 24.

109 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 2, *Die*



Charles Oman (1860–1946).
(National Portrait Gallery, Creative Commons NC, https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/use-this-image/?mkey=mw68626)

interpretations may stem from his aversion to Imperial Germany and its culture. He viewed German policy as a threat to British interests and the European *status quo*.[110] Delbrück's work was often met with strong reluctance in the British Isles, mainly due to his questioning of widely held "historiographical clichés."[111]

Oman's dominant position also resulted in limited popularity for Delbrück's work in British historiography during the interwar period and the early post-war years.[112] Oman made significant contributions to the development of an alternative model of academic military historiography, more closely linked to the tradition of memoirs and analyses published by British soldiers. Oman and Delbrück are often compared and considered to be precursors of the same trend (academic military history). Delbrück's perspective has stood the test of time better and has become the basis for later methodological innovations. Oman, on the other hand, served as a model for those who combined the academic and "general staff" perspectives, including Generals J. F. C. (John Frederick Charles) Fuller (1878–1966) and Cyril Falls (1888–1971) and Captain Basil Liddell Hart (1895–1970).

In France, Ferdinand Lot (1866–1952)—the author of the monumental study of medieval military history, published in 1946—attempted to popularize Delbrück's research perspective.[113] Lot inherited not only the structure of the work and the method of narrative construction from his predecessor but also the conviction of the inability of studying military affairs in isolation from political, social, and economic aspects. He also supported the idea of *Sachkritik*, defining it as its creator did.[114] Lot's extensive knowledge of source studies, acquired through many years of regional history research, resulted in a distinguished work marked by far-reaching criticism, multidimensionality, and reliability.

Like Oman, Lot was a civilian scholar who fully shared Delbrück's reserva-

Germanen, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. 532.

110 Charles Oman, *Things I have seen*, *cit.*, pp. 24–50.

111 Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» *cit*., p. 330.

112 Stephen Morillo, Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, Polity Press, Cambridge–Malden 2006, p. 36.

113 Recognition of Delbrück as a precursor in fully academic studies of medieval warfare: Ferdinand Lot, *L'Art militaire et les armées au Moyen Age en Europe et dans le Proche Orient*, 1, Payot, Paris 1946, p. 9.

114 *Ibid*., pp. 9–11.

tions about the officers. According to Lot, frequent interpretive errors by authors from the ranks stemmed from their inadequate understanding of the principles of source criticism and their belief in the universality of the rules of war, which they failed to contextualize.[115] Lot essentially questioned the validity of writing military history from the "general staff perspective" and argued for recognizing war as an integral element of medieval reality with various intertwined contemporary aspects.

One consequence of adopting Lot's assumptions was the ability to determine the size of medieval armies. Like Delbrück, Lot attempted to estimate the number of combatants using surviving demographic data. His analysis was the first French study of this type, closely associated with the "*Annales* School."[116]

The influence of Lot was limited by Marc Bloch (1886–1944), one of his students[117] and the co-founder of the "*Annales* School."[118] Bloch's monograph on feudalism is one of the most significant achievements in the French humanities in the first half of the twentieth century.[119] Although Bloch dedicated his work to Lot and utilized publications by both Lot and Delbrück, his combination of social, cultural, and economic history, as well as *mentalité*, produced revolutionary results, which still serve as a reference point in medieval studies. Bloch downplayed the military function of knighthood, yet the "Annalistic" approach to the topic overshadowed more traditional perspectives for a time. Bloch's study was a creative development of Lot's work (and thus indirectly of

115 *Ibid*., p. 9.

116 Jean-Jacques Hémardinquer, «De l'histoire-bataille à l'histoire quantitative (II),» *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 20, 4, 1965, pp. 838–840.

117 On Lot's students and his connection to the circle around the journal *Annales*: Jacques Le Goff, «Ferdinand Lot et les «Annales»,» *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 21, 5, 1966, pp. 1179–1186; Agnès Graceffa, «When the seminar becomes a family: The medievalist Ferdinand Lot (1866–1952) and his students,» *Les Études Sociales*, 171–172, 1–2, 2020, pp. 25–56.

118 Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929–89*, Polity Press, Oxford 1990, pp. 12–31; Francine Michaud, «Marc Bloch (1886–1944),» in Philip Daileader, Philip Whalen (ed.), *French Historians 1900–2000*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden–Oxford 2010, pp. 49–57; Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, wyd. 3, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2011, pp. 718–723, 726–729.

119 Marc Bloch, *La Société féodale*, 1–2, Albin Michel, Paris 1939–1940. Bloch's work only gained its status after World War II ended due to the outbreak of the war. Tragically, the author did not live to see this moment; he was murdered by Germans in 1944.

Delbrück's), which goes unnoticed by many people. The proximity of Lot and Bloch is particularly pertinent when considering that Delbrück first employed the quantitative approach favored by "Annalists" in military history.[120]

The next step in moving away from the "general staff perspective" was Georges Duby's (1919–1996) use of the history of mentalities and historical anthropology to describe the Battle of Bouvines, which took place in 1214.[121] Eleven years later, he applied a similar method of analysis to the biography of William Marshal (1146/1147–1219).[122] Duby's innovative approach firmly established the significance of the "*Annales* School," alongside Bloch's book, serving as a model for a modern approach to military history. Duby's method is strongly rooted in the belief in culture as the key to understanding human behavior. While it did not contradict Delbrück's view, many French scholars considered the old masters noble relics of an era when narrative history had very limited scientific value.[123]

While Lot's work was occasionally cited in France, even if only in passing, Delbrück's publications were mentioned much less frequently. Disregard for classical German historiography was evident not only in fundamental studies on the cultural history of knighthood by Jean Flori (1936–2018), a Duby student, but also in many more traditional works on medieval conflicts.[124] For many

120 Arden Bucholz, «Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History,» *The Historian*, 55, 3, 1993, pp. 518–519, 521, 525; Jonas Klein, «Hans Delbrücks ‚unbekannte' Schüler – Wissenschaftliche Schulen als Beharrungsfaktor der Hochschulentwicklung,» in Edith Glaser, Carola Groppe, Jürgen Overhoff (ed.), *Universitäten und Hochschulen zwischen Beharrung und Reform. Bildungshistorische Perspektiven*, Klinkhardt, Bad Heilbrunn 2024, pp. 116–132.

121 Georges Duby, *27 juillet 1214 : Le dimanche de Bouvines*, Gallimard, Paris 1973. See also Id., «Guerre et société dans l'Europe féodale : la morale des guerriers,» in Vittore Branca (ed.), *Concetto, storia, miti e immagini del Medio Evo. Atti del XIV corso internazionale d'alta cultura*, Sansoni, Firenze 1973, pp. 473–482.

122 Id., *Guillaume le Maréchal ou le meilleur chevalier du monde*, Folio Histoire, Paris 1984.

123 It is worth noting that texts defending the necessity of studying military history and pointing out the need for continuity in this area were published in the pages of *Annales*. E.g., Piero Pieri, «Sur les dimensions de l'Histoire militaire,» *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations*, 18, 4, 1963, pp. 625–638; Annie Kriegel, «Vers une rénovation de l'histoire militaire,» *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 20, 4, 1965, pp. 833–836.

124 Jean Flori, *L'idéologie du glaive. Préhistoire de la chevalerie*, Droz, Genève 1983; Id., *L'essor de la chevalerie XI^e–XII^e siècles*, Droz, Genève 1986; Id., *Chevaliers et chevalerie au Moyen Age*, Fayard, Paris 1998.

Ferdinand Lot (1866–1952).

years, the influence of the "*Annales* School" remained unchallenged in medieval studies. As the focus shifted from traditional narrative forms to socioeconomic and mentalities history, the existing method of recounting the past, based on event history and personalization, became quite obsolete.[125]

Nevertheless, in some respects, Delbrück's perspective was incompatible with the concepts of historical research promoted by successive generations of "Annalists." Piero Pieri (1893–1979) built upon Delbrück's ideas by promoting in *Annales* the study of military history in relation to political, social, economic, and technological issues.[126] He presented his postulates synthetically, engaging in polemic solely regarding the dominant component. According to Pieri, military affairs should be understood primarily in a social context rather than a political one.[127] Referring to the experiences gained from both world wars, the Italian scholar emphasized the need to supplement Delbrück's vision with in-depth research into technology, thus aligning with the areas of knowledge explored by "Annalists."[128] Thus, Pieri's most valid "programmatic" text on military history, published in *Annales*, largely reiterated Delbrück's vision.

Pieri engaged in a polemic with Fraccaro concerning their differing attitudes toward *Sachkritik*. They corresponded in 1938, but only Pieri's letter has survived.[129] Pieri defends Delbrück's achievements against what he considers to be excessive criticism. He points out to Fraccaro that Delbrück was not just a representative of the German military historical service; he was a man who challenged the Great General Staff and paid for it with the great hostility of many

125 André Corvisier, «Aspects divers de l'histoire militaire,» *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 20, 1, Études d'histoire militaire (XVII^{e}–XX^{e} siècles), 1973, p. 2; Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *Armed Forces & Society*, 7, 2, 1981, pp. 299–300, 302; Martin van Creveld, «Thoughts on Military History,» *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 4, Military History, 1983, p. 552; Raymond Callahan, «Three Faces of Military History,» *The Army Historian*, 3, 1984, p. 8; Antonio Espino López, «La historia militar. Entre la renovacion y la tradicion,» *Manuscrits*, 11, 1993, pp. 227–228; Id., «La renovación de la historia de las batallas,» *Revista de historia militar*, 91, 2001, p. 161.

126 Piero Pieri, «Sur les dimensions de l'Histoire militaire,» *cit*., pp. 625–626, 628.

127 *Ibid*., p. 630.

128 *Ibid*., pp. 629–630.

129 Pieri's letter to Fraccaro dated February 23, 1938, published in: Francesco Torchiani, *Uno storico rettore magnifico. Plinio Fraccaro e l'Università di Pavia*, Cisalpino, Milano 2011, pp. 206–209.

officers.[130] Fraccaro was unfamiliar with the course of Delbrück's academic career and may have dismissed him hastily as just another author from the military ranks without a solid academic background. Pieri encouraged Fraccaro to study Delbrück's work more thoroughly to fully appreciate the value of his analyses.[131]

Pieri's strong intellectual connection with his German predecessor earned him the nickname "the Italian Delbrück."[132] His publication was invaluable to Italian scholarship, largely shaping Italian military history in the spirit of Delbrück.[133]

One of Delbrück's and Pieri's followers was Philippe Contamine (1932–2022), who wrote a widely read synthesis of medieval European military history.[134] In the introduction, Contamine declared the close connection between military issues and political, social, and economic matters, thereby clarifying the model's origins.[135] Reading his work reveals the hidden potential of the traditional approach when the author moves away from treating military phenomena as separate from other aspects of the history. Contamine's publication is essential for understanding medieval military history because he successfully combined an openness to various currents with a focus on the main subject of the narrative rather than periodically fashionable analytical models and theories.[136]

Contamine also noted the shortage of academic studies in the field of military history in France, significantly inferior to Germany or Great Britain. While groundbreaking books by Delbrück and Oman were published in these countries, paving the way for their successors, French historiography was still domi-

130 *Ibid*., p. 209.

131 *Ibid*., p. 207.

132 Nicola Labanca, «Piero Pieri, ovvero dei risultati e delle difficoltà della storia militare in Italia,» in Fabio De Ninno, *Piero Pieri. In pensiero e lo storico militare*, Le Monnier, Firenze 2019, p. XX.

133 See Fabio De Ninno, *Piero Pieri. Il pensiero e lo storico militare*, Le Monnier, Firenze 2019, pp. 78–86, 92–101.

134 Philippe Contamine, *La guerre au Moyen Age*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1980.

135 *Ibid*., p. 6.

136 Paolo Grillo, *Cavalieri e popoli in armi. Le istituzioni militari nell'Italia medievale*, Laterza, Roma–Bari 2008, p. VIII; Anne Curry, David A. Graff, «Introduction to Volume II,» in Eid. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of War*, 2, *War and the Medieval World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2020, p. 2.

nated by works written from the "general staff perspective," meaning they were almost exclusively written by professional officers.[137] Therefore, Contamine's adoption of the Delbrück tradition seems logical, given the lack of a viable alternative.

In the British context, Christopher Allmand (1936–2022) took a similar approach, incorporating elements of the "new military history" and the history of mentalities associated with the "*Annales* School."[138] He cited Pieri's article as the basis for his arguments.[139] Allmand's analysis of the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) stands out compared to other publications on the topic because it combines the "Annalistic" approach with the perspective inherited from Delbrück. However, Allmand's work is characterized by his exclusive reliance on post-war trends, while ignoring Pieri's acknowledgment of his German predecessor's influence.

Alongside the "*Annales* School" emerged traditional historiography, which aligned more with the interpretive debates of the interwar period than with the dominant research pursuits in France. The conservative style did not usually have a negative impact on the substantive level, and some studies have since been recognized as equally inspiring. Jan F. Verbruggen (1920–2013) was one of the leading figures. In 1954, he addressed fundamental interpretive issues in medieval military history. He verified many views rooted in the historiography of Oman, Delbrück, and Lot.[140] Verbruggen organized the discourse while giving credit to the pioneers whose works he cited as his main sources of inspiration.[141] If anyone was responsible for Delbrück fading into the background after World War II, it seems to have been Verbruggen. He is one of the scholars who shaped medieval military studies as we know them today.[142]

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137 Philippe Contamine, «L'histoire militaire,» in François Bédarida (ed.), *L'histoire et le métier d'historien en France 1945–1995*, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris 1998, p. 361.

138 Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300–c. 1450*, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, pp. 2, 4, 136–150.

139 *Ibid*., p. 1.

140 Jan F. Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe During the Middle Ages from the Eighth Century to 1340*, 2nd ed., Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge 1997. The book was originally published in 1954 in Flemish.

141 *Ibid*., pp. 2–5, 9–10.

142 John Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe 730–1200*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca–London

Even considering Allmand's work, British historiography was more conservative than its French counterpart. Aside from Oman, the field was shaped by the work of R. C. (Raymond Charles) Smail (1913–1986).[143] In the United States, John Beeler's (1916–1985) book remained the most important publication for many years.[144] Both authors paid particular attention to the conduct of warfare. They both benefited directly from Delbrück's work and ranked it, alongside the books of Oman and Lot, as a classic texts for understanding medieval military history.[145] Consequently, Delbrück's findings remained the subject of critical reflection, as evidenced by the equally relevant and widely read synthesis of John France (1941–), which shares thematic and conceptual similarities with Contamine's book.[146]

A notable feature of military historiography on the Middle Ages is the minimal prejudice against Delbrück, a phenomenon far more prevalent in the works of authors who specialize in ancient history and Enlightenment warfare. Delbrück earned his doctorate in history with a dissertation on the Middle Ages, so medievalists did not consider him an outsider. Initially, research on military affairs was also very limited in scope. This made it easier for Delbrück to achieve pioneering status without controversy, which was more difficult for popular eras such as antiquity or those used to create national myths such as modernity. The significance of the "*Annales* School" further reinforced Delbrück's research hypotheses, though contemporary authors tend to cite his disciples and rarely familiarize themselves with the content of the third volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*.

In recently published works summarizing previous research, Delbrück is presented as one of the pioneers of a fully academic approach to the subject,

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1971, p. XIV; Helen Nicholson, *Medieval Warfare: Theory and Practice of War in Europe 300–1500*, Red Globe, Basingstoke–New York 2004, p. 5; John France, «Introduction,» in Id. (ed.), *Medieval Warfare 1000–1300*, Routledge, London–New York 2016, p. XIV; Anne Curry, David A. Graff, «Introduction to Volume II,» *cit.*, p. 2.

143 R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1956.

144 John Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe*, *cit*.

145 R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare*, *cit*., pp. 259–260; John Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe*, *cit*., p. 255.

146 John France, *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades 1000–1300*, Routledge, London–New York 1999.

alongside Oman and Lot,[147] which is not surprising as medieval studies have never been the strong suit of "historians in military uniforms." In light of the historiographical tendencies prevalent at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, drawing attention to the Berlin professor's Eurocentrism is not a serious accusation.[148] His publications have become a permanent fixture in bibliographies. Although our understanding of the era's characteristics is primarily shaped by the works of Verbruggen, Contamine, and France, some voices remain consistent with Lot's view of the key importance of *Sachkritik* to overcoming many interpretive limitations.[149] Bernard S. Bachrach (1939–2023) emphasized Delbrück's contributions to demographic studies, enabling him to accurately depict the scale of armed conflicts in the Middle Ages. Many authors of preserved sources presented completely fantastical estimates of the size of fighting armies, which still plagues historians today.[150]

In this context, Stephen Morillo's (1958–) contribution to the discussion

147 Aldo A. Settia, Fabio Bargigia, «Guerra e istituzioni militari nella storiografia italiana sul medioevo,» in Nicola Labanca (ed.), *Storie di guerre ed eserciti. Gli studi italiani di storia militare negli ultimi venticinque anni*, Unicopli, Milano 2011, pp. 211–214; Bernard S. Bachrach, David S. Bachrach, *Warfare in Medieval Europe c. 400–1453*, Routledge, London–New York 2017, p. 13; Kurt-Georg Cramm, «Einleitung zum Nachdruck der zweiten Auflage von 1964,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 3, *Das Mittelalter*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, pp. 771–772; Nicola Labanca, «Premessa,» in Paolo Grillo, Aldo A. Settia (ed.), *Guerre ed eserciti nel Medioevo*, il Mulino, Bologna 2018, pp. 8–9 (just Delbrück); Anne Curry, David A. Graff, «Introduction to Volume II,» *cit*., p. 1. Sometimes he is mentioned only alongside Oman, treating Lot simply as a follower of Delbrück: Nicola Labanca, «I due *Makers of Modern Strategy*: guerra e società, storia e scienza sociali,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Guerra e strategia nell'età contemporanea*, Casa, Genova 1992, p. 9.

148 Anne Curry, David A. Graff, «Introduction to Volume II,» *cit*., p. 1 (drawing attention to the aforementioned fact without drawing far-reaching, and therefore potentially harmful, conclusions).

149 Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2001, p. 161; David S. Bachrach, *Warfare in Tenth-Century Germany*, Boydell, Woodbridge 2012, p. 8; Bernard S. Bachrach, David S. Bachrach, *Warfare in Medieval Europe*, *cit*., pp. 13–14; Kurt-Georg Cramm, «Einleitung zum Nachdruck,» *cit*., pp. 771–772.

150 Bernard S. Bachrach, «Early Medieval Military Demography: Some Observations on the Methods of Hans Delbrück,» in Donald Kagay, L. J. Andrew Villalon (ed.), *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge 1999, pp. 3–20; Id., *Early Carolingian Warfare*, *cit*., pp. 57–58; David S. Bachrach, *Warfare in Tenth-Century Germany*, *cit*., pp. 8, 177–178, 195.

about the usefulness of *Sachkritik* is noteworthy. While acknowledging the value of Delbrück's approach, Morillo emphasized the impact of shifting away from the concept of an "objective" presentation of history, as conceived by Leopold von Ranke.[151] Morillo believes *Sachkritik* is beneficial only when dealing with source-critical problems beyond the scope of fieldwork or verifying the numbers provided in sources.[152]

Given the publication in which Morillo's study appeared (*Festschrift* dedicated to Bachrach), his stance may be interpreted as a polemic not against Delbrück but against his followers (including the honoree). Examining the work of the "father of military history" reveals that he believed *Sachkritik* was an impossible-to-apply method in every instance. Morillo generally aligns with Delbrück's conviction but considers the influence of the American "narrative turn" on the perception of the function and structure of sources—a topic beyond Delbrück's scope. Morillo's paper thus gives the impression of rejecting the perception of military issues as solely "true history" and therefore fully verifiable without first establishing the status of the information contained in the sources. Nevertheless, Morillo's doubts do not necessarily advocate rejecting *Sachkritik*.

Renaissance military history is less popular than medieval military history, but Delbrück's influence is also evident in Renaissance studies. Pieri, a proponent of Delbrück's concept, wrote the aforementioned "programmatic" article published in *Annales*, as well as a monograph about the military transformations of the Italian states during the Renaissance.[153] Written from a socioeconomic historical perspective, the monograph considered non-military aspects much more broadly than Delbrück did. Soon after, Pieri presented his general observations on the various factors shaping the evolution of early modern European warfare in another study, also in the Delbrückian spirit.[154]

Pieri's work gained recognition, resulting in a phenomenon also present in

151 Stephen Morillo, «Contrary Winds: Theories of History and the Limits of *Sachkritik*,» in Gregory I. Halfond (ed.), *The Medieval Way of War: Studies in Medieval Military History in Honor of Bernard S. Bachrach*, Taylor & Francis, Burlington 2015, p. 206.

152 *Ibid*., pp. 205–220.

153 Piero Pieri, *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana*, Einaudi, Torino 1952. The book is a thoroughly revised and expanded version of Pieri's earlier work, published in 1934.

154 Id., «L'evoluzione dell'arte militare nei secoli XV, XVI e XVII,» in *Nuove questioni di storia moderna*, 2, Marzorati, Milano 1966, pp. 1123–1179.

medieval studies: while Italian scholars widely cited his research assumptions in support of his vision, the actual creator, Delbrück, was overlooked. There are two reasons why Pieri is preferred over his predecessor. First, Delbrück's work coincided with the interwar period. In light of the dynamic development of new interpretive trends, appealing to the ideas of an author associated with the then-fashionable "*Annales* School" was more favorable. Similar behavior can still be observed in the world of the academic community today. Second, Delbrück did not prioritize the Renaissance in his work, paying it less attention than any other period. In contrast, Pieri demonstrated how valuable results could be achieved by applying the "father of military history's" guidelines to detailed studies. His book was the first of its kind and quickly earned classic status, overshadowing the works of Oman and F. L. (Frederick Lewis) Taylor (1892–1961).[155]

Pieri had successors to his work, even though they sometimes overestimated the impact of Italian influence on other European countries' militaries. J. R. (John Rigby) Hale (1923–1999)[156] and Michael Mallett (1932–2008),[157] representing the British academic community, based their research on assumptions similar to Pieri's. Lot also made significant contributions to Renaissance military research. Like Delbrück, he focused on demographic studies and verifying the size of fighting armies, resulting in a monograph dedicated to the participation of the French armed forces in the Italian Wars (1494–1559) and the subsequent religious wars.[158]

Conversely, Delbrück's findings received a moderate response in German-speaking countries. One scholar who openly expressed appreciation for Delbrück's work was the medievalist Wilhelm Erben (1864–1933).[159] Delbrück

155 F. L. Taylor, *The Art of War in Italy 1494–1529*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1921.

156 J. R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450–1620*, Fontana, London 1985. Hale was also influenced by the "new military history," affirming the "war and society" trend. Regarding the "new military history," see the next chapter.

157 Michael Mallett, *Mercenaries and Their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy*, Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa 1974.

158 Ferdinand Lot, *Recherches sur les effectifs des armées françaises des guerres d'Italie aux guerres de religion, 1494–1562*, Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris 1962.

159 Wilhelm Erben, *Kriegsgeschichte des Mittelalters*, Oldenbourg, München–Berlin 1929, pp. 26–27.

faced increasing attacks during the interwar period, which intensified after the Nazis came to power in 1933.[160] The works of Major Eugen von Frauenholz (1882–1949)[161] and Lieutenant Werner Hahlweg (1912–1989)[162]—authors of extensive monographs on Renaissance military history—were more readily promoted. They openly supported the new political regime and were therefore better suited to the new political reality than Delbrück, who died in 1929. After World War II, the discourse was dominated by the "military revolution" theory, which gradually pushed aside previous, more traditional research on warfare, despite its direct relationship to it.[163]

While Frauenholz described Delbrück's studies on the tactics of Renaissance armies as crucial,[164] Hahlweg failed to mention Delbrück when discussing the evolution of the German art of war (*Kriegskunst*) and military theory (*Kriegstheorie*) after the war. Instead, Hahlweg listed his primary opponents.[165] His omission appears to be a deliberate oversight, revealing the power of a specific *damnatio memoriae* imposed on Delbrück by German "historians in military uniforms," some of whom came from the army of the Third Reich (see Hahlweg himself).

The German struggle to establish historical authorities became less significant in light of the popularity of the concept of the "military revolution," which was developed by Michael Roberts (1908–1996). He first presented it in 1956

160 Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik. Der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1914–1956*, Schöningh, Paderborn 2002, pp. 151–155.

161 Main work: Eugen von Frauenholz, *Das Heerwesen in der Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, 1–2, Beck, München 1938–1939.

162 Main work: Werner Hahlweg, *Die Heeresreform der Oranier und die Antike. Studien zur Geschichte des Kriegswesens der Niederlande, Deutschlands, Frankreichs, Englands, Italiens, Spaniens und der Schweiz vom Jahre 1589 bis zum Dreißigjährigen Kriege*, Junker und Dünnhaupt, Berlin 1941.

163 Marco Formisano, «L'arte della guerra e le rivoluzioni militari,» in Virgilio Ilari (ed.), Future Wars. *Storia della distopia militare*, Società italiana di Storia Militare. Acies edizioni Milano, Milano 2016, pp. 131–143.

164 Eugen von Frauenholz, *Entwicklungsgeschichte des deutschen Heerwesens*, 2, 1, Beck, München 1936, p. VII.

165 Werner Hahlweg, «Krieg – Kriegskunst – Kriegstheorie,» in Ursula von Gersdorff (ed.), *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte. Wege der Forschung*, Bernard und Graefe, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 323–324.

in a thirty-two-page booklet, a transcript of a lecture he had given at Queen's University Belfast the same year.[166] Other figures, such as William H. McNeill (1917–2016), Geoffrey Parker (1943–), Jeremy Black (1955–), and Clifford J. Rogers (1967–), have also weighed in on the matter. Roberts' theses caused such a stir that the "military revolution" theory came to dominate discourse about the early modern period, appearing in various forms in most publications. The need to consider aspects such as economics, architecture, geographical knowledge, and state administrative transformations extends Roberts' theory significantly beyond military history, making it a broad source of inspiration. It also positions armies and wars within their proper context as part of universal history, encompassing all tangibly sourced spheres of human activity. This aligns with Delbrück's belief, although in light of the "military revolution" theory, his research on the Renaissance now seems somewhat archaic.

The importance of fortifications in the new style of warfare, closely linked to the emergence of *trace italienne*, brought the experiences of the Italian Wars to the forefront. As a consequence, regardless of whether an author focuses on the military history of France, Spain, the Netherlands, or Sweden, he/she must consult Italian literature shaped by Pieri. The far-reaching effects of the transformations forced by the course of the Italian Wars keep Delbrück's vision of studying military history alive, albeit indirectly and often unconsciously.

When discussing the current state of research in Renaissance military history, Piero Del Negro (1941–) mentioned two scholars who had a decisive influence on its development: Delbrück and Pieri.[167] Oman's competitive approach is absent due to the postwar evolution of discourse. Analyzing only organization, armament, and tactics is simply too narrow. The devastating Religious Wars in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe forced historians to focus on sociocultural history. Without it, verifying any historiographical theories, let alone developing new ones, would be challenging.

166 Michael Roberts, *The Military Revolution 1560–1660: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered Before the Queen's University of Belfast*, Boyd, Belfast 1956.

167 Piero Del Negro, *Guerra ed eserciti da Machiavelli a Napoleone*, Laterza, Roma–Bari 2001, pp. 140–141; Id., «Introduzione,» in Paola Bianchi, Piero Del Negro (ed.), *Guerre ed eserciti nell'età moderna*, il Mulino, Bologna 2018, pp. 11, 13–14. Similarly: Nicola Labanca, «I due *Makers of Modern Strategy*,» *cit.*, p. 9.

Del Negro's viewpoint requires slight modification because—as Giampiero Brunelli (1968–) noted—the theory of the "military revolution" has been the main subject of debate for years, overshadowing all other themes, even in Italy.[168] Although disputes sparked by Roberts' vision are becoming less intense each year, a resolution is still far off, especially since a theory requiring further research quickly gained the status of an interpretive paradigm.[169] Nevertheless, the postulates proposed by Delbrück and reinforced by Pieri established a basis for fundamental research. Without it, verifying any historiographical theories would be difficult, if not impossible.

Considering this perspective, one can generally agree with Del Negro. However, Fernand Braudel's (1902–1985) overwhelming influence on Renaissance studies should not be overlooked. Braudel was far more critical of military history than Pieri, influencing the attitudes of other "*Annales* School" supporters.[170]

5.3. The era of standing armies (1648–1871)[171]

Delbrück's influence was at its least substantial in studies covering the period from the end of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) to the conflicts involving the Prussian army led by Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder (1864, 1866, and 1870–1871). This state of affairs was a direct result of Delbrück's limited interest in pre-Enlightenment times and his specific focus of his writings on the military activities of Friedrich II, Napoleon I Bonaparte, and Moltke.[172] Delbrück became embroiled in interpretive disputes, which, for his opponents, were only partly of an academic nature contributed to the decreasing clarity of the context of his arguments over the years for historians writing after 1945, who were heavily influenced by the "military revolution" theory.

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168 Giampiero Brunelli, *La guerra in età moderna*, Laterza, Bari–Roma 2021, pp. 195–200.

169 *Ibid*., p. 200.

170 Braudel's most important work that influenced the way military history is written: Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen a l'époque de Philippe II*, 1–3, 3e éd., Armand Colin, Paris 1976.

171 The title of the subsection is based on the proposed periodization of military history presented by Delbrück in the fourth volume of his *magnum opus* (*Die Epoche der stehenden Heere*): Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., p. 283.

172 *Ibid*., pp. 283–341.

Paradoxically, despite being closer in time and culture to the late nineteenth century, researchers from a more appropriate era for applying *Sachkritik* showed the least interest in Delbrück's method. Their reserve may have been due to the intuitive use of *Sachkritik* in earlier years, which made it seem less innovative to modern researchers than to ancient and medieval scholars. The nature of the sources used and the continued influence of the officer corps may also have been significant factors.

Delbrück's victory in the dispute with the German military historical service did not elevate his status as one of the most eminent experts on the wars of Friedrich II, nor did it encourage subsequent researchers to study his other works. Instead, the German "historians in military uniforms" are celebrating a posthumous triumph. The reason is relatively easy to explain, though only to a certain extent justified.

Books published under the banner of the Great General Staff have a high contemporary status primarily due to the vast amount of factual information its members compiled, which greatly facilitates the work of historians specializing in the Prussian military issues from the time of Friedrich II. On the other hand, Delbrück's published texts focus on broader interpretations, paying particular attention to Friedrich II's strategy against the backdrop of concepts favored in Enlightenment Europe. The impressive number of details in volumes published by the War History Department, and later the Second War History Department, are hard to overlook. As a result, some historians were impressed by the sheer amount of work done and uncritically adopted the presented perspective, failing to notice—or being unwilling to acknowledge—that, at some point, the members of the German military historical service capitulated to Delbrück's arguments. Faced with the need to reevaluate their findings, some researchers simply dismiss the entire dispute, adopting a similar stance to Christopher Duffy's (1936–2022), who summed up Delbrück's work as follows: "Delbrück, however, was one of those people who draw their vital force from confrontation and controversy."[173]

173 Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: A Military Life*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London–New York 1985, p. 284. Today, Duffy is widely considered one of the best experts on the military history of Enlightenment Prussia, if not the best. This is why his opinions resonate so widely within the academic community. The above opinion about Delbrück is one of the few,

In contrast, Gerhard A. Ritter (1888–1967)[174] and Robert R. Palmer (1909–2002)[175] largely shared Delbrück's critical perspective. They did not attribute to him a particular fondness for starting disputes and held a different view. Even if the Berlin professor did have an extraordinary polemical temperament, the officer corps centered around the Great General Staff was the more aggressive party, a fact discreetly omitted by Duffy despite repeatedly using the findings of its representatives.

Duffy found General Friedrich von Bernhardi's analysis of Friedrich II's strategy more convincing. Following the example of the War History Department, Bernhardi viewed Friedrich II's strategy as a precursor to the Napoleonic strategy.[176] Even if we were to accept his view as correct, reducing Delbrück's work solely to the dispute about types of strategy would be an oversimplification. Part of the blame lies with the "father of military history," who, at one point, made the dispute with the Great General Staff—not entirely of his own volition—the central theme of his studies of Friedrich II. As a result, Delbrück's important work on Field Marshal Neidhardt von Gneisenau's military career was overshadowed, as was the broader research perspective adopted by scholars focusing on earlier periods.

In the case of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, little interest in Delbruck's work was influenced by the popularity of the "military revolution" theory and the extensive research conducted by Duffy[177] and André Corvisier

as Duffy usually ignored his findings.

174 Gerhard Ritter, *Frederick the Great: A Historical Profile*, University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London 1974, pp. 130–133. The first German edition of the biography prepared by Ritter (1936) was intended to be a response to Nazi propaganda, which was heavily based on the tradition of Prussian/German militarism: Id., «The German Professor in the Third Reich,» *The Review of Polities*, 8, 2, 1946, p. 246. Ritter's memoirs remind us that the political context for citing historians in Germany at that time was not solely dictated by substantive considerations. Although Delbrück's worldview corresponded well with Ritter's anti-militaristic attitude, it exposed both of them to marginalization and even harassment before 1945.

175 Robert R. Palmer, «Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bülow: From Dynastic to National War,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 95.

176 Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, *cit*., p. 284.

177 Id., *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London–New York 1987.

(1914–2018).[178] While their underlying historiographical assumptions did not conflict with those of the German precursor in many respects, they were shaped by different influences. Supporters of the traditional approach also maintained a strong position, e.g., Black, who took a similarly distant stance on using Delbrück's work.[179]

The dominance of Anglo-American historiography is so dominant that even Del Negro, who is associated with Delbrück's historical heritage, characterized the military transformations taking place in Enlightenment Europe using primarily English-language publications.[180]

Today, Delbrück's arguments about the Napoleonic system of warfare are largely overlooked. French authors rejected the idea promoted by the German military historical service of equating the strategic concepts of Friedrich II and Napoleon, considering it an extreme eccentricity at best. Delbrück was captivated by Napoleon's military actions because they provided a point of reference in relation to Friedrich II and Moltke. Consequently, the German debate about the French art of war from 1804 to 1815 was essentially a debate about the sources of Moltke's victories. Studies by Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929)[181] and General Hubert Camon (1855–1942)[182] exemplify the French perspective, asso-

178 André Corvisier, *Armées et sociétés en Europe de 1494 à 1789*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1976. In the bibliographies of contemporary works, the English translation of Corvisier's book, which was published in 1979, appears much more frequently.

179 Jeremy Black, *European Warfare 1660–1815*, Taylor & Francis Ltd., London 1994; Id., *The Warfare in the Eighteenth Century*, Harper, London 1999; Id., *Western Warfare 1775–1882*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2001; Id., *European Warfare, 1494–1660*, Routledge, London–New York 2002. Black also wrote a valid book in which he presented his perspective on the "military revolution" theory: Id., *A Military Revolution?: Military Change and European Society 1550–1800*, Macmillan, Basingstoke–London 1991. It was further developed 20 years later in his new study on the subject: Id., *Beyond the Military Revolution: War in the Seventeenth-Century World*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2011.

180 Piero Del Negro, *Guerra ed eserciti*, *cit*., pp. 81–121.

181 Ferdinand Foch, *Les Principes de la guerre. Conférences faites à l'École supérieure de guerre*, Berger-Levrault, Paris 1903; Id., *La Conduite de la guerre*, Berger-Levrault, Paris 1905.

182 Hubert Camon, *La guerre napoléonienne : les systèmes d'opérations : théorie et technique*, Chapelot, Paris 1907; Id., *La guerre napoléonienne : les batailles*, Chapelot, Paris 1910; Id., *La guerre napoléonienne : précis des campagnes*, 1–2, Chapelot, Paris 1911; Id., *Le système de guerre de Napoléon*, 2e éd., Berger-Levrault, Paris 1923; Id., *Quand et comment Napoléon a conçu son système de bataille*, Berger-Levrault, Paris 1935.

ciating Moltke's style of command with Napoleon's rather than Friedrich II's.

Since the publication of General Antoine H. de Jomini's work, the use of the "strategy of annihilation" by Napoleon has been a well-known fact in the relevant literature.[183] One did not need to read Delbrück's publication to realize this. Jomini wrote an extensive, four-volume work on Friedrich II's campaigns. In it, he highlighted the similarities and differences between the two styles of command, treating the former as a prelude to the latter. Jomini did not portray Napoleon as an imitator of the Prussian king.[184] During an era of expanding nationalism, it is difficult to imagine the French recognizing Friedrich II's precedence, especially after their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871. Therefore, the German dispute about Friedrich II's strategy must have seemed detached from historical reality. Since French historiography has undoubtedly influenced the discourse surrounding Napoleon, it could not have positively impacted the popularity of Delbrück's Napoleonic analyses.

Jomini was not the only expert on Napoleonic strategy at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Clausewitz was also among them, and Delbrück was directly inspired by his work to study the relationship between the strategic concepts of Friedrich II and Napoleon. The excessive weight placed on Moltke's statements caused Clausewitz's writings to be interpreted through the lens of the German victories rather than according to their original content, a point Delbrück skillfully pointed out to the polemicists.[185]

If any area saw Delbrück's authority remain unchallenged by historians focused on the nineteenth century, it was precisely his knowledge of Clausewitz's work. Much credit goes to Raymond Aron (1905–1983), Peter Paret (1924–2020), and Hew Strachan (1949–).

As a point of reference for his thoughts on Clausewitz's ideas, Aron primarily cited *Vom Kriege* and Delbrück's publications.[186] While working on the book,

183 [Antoine H.] de Jomini, *Traité de grande tactique*, 1–2, Giguet et Michaud, Paris 1805; Id., *Précis de l'art de la guerre*, 1–2, Anselin et Laguionie, Paris 1838.

184 Id., *Traité des grandes opérations militaires. L'Histoire critique des campagnes de Frédéric II comparées à celles de l'Empereur Napoléon*, 1–4, 2e éd., Magimel, Paris 1811.

185 See Chapter 4.

186 Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1986, pp. 70–83.

Aron noticed the interpretive dispute sparked by the Berlin professor regarding the sources of Friedrich II's and Moltke's successes.[187] Delbrück's undisputed achievements earned him the status of the leading expert on Clausewitzian issues in Aron's eyes.

Aron was more interested in how the adoption of a specific interpretation of *Vom Kriege* by German decision-makers affected the course of World War I than in purely academic disputes about Clausewitz's thought. In the summary of his book, Aron portrayed Delbrück as a voice of reason in the conflict with the German military establishment, contrasting him with General Erich Ludendorff.[188] According to Aron, Ludendorff had a superficial and inaccurate interpretation of Clausewitz's writings.[189]

Paret considered Delbrück to be one of the four most notable German scholars of Clausewitz.[190] He emphasized Delbrück's contributions to understanding the relationship between military theory and Clausewitz's ideas.[191] Paret also agreed with Delbrück's assessment of Clausewitz as a "military critic," citing his shortcomings in historical methodology and his assumption that historical writing was intended for practical use. Clausewitz could not compensate for the shortcomings through diligence, thoroughness, or objectivity.[192]

Among postwar authors specializing in Clausewitzian issues, Paret was the one who most closely aligned with Delbrück's views, which he sought to popularize in the Anglo-American context. Paret expressed a clear pro-Delbrückian

187 *Ibid*., pp. 9, 53, 57, 108, 139.

188 *Ibid*., p. 410.

189 *Ibid*., pp. 257–264.

190 Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State: The Man, His Theories, and His Times*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1976, p. 5. More generally: Id., «Clausewitz: A Bibliographical Survey,» *World Politics*, 17, 2, 1965, p. 277; Id., «Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century,» in Michael Howard (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of War*, Cassell, Bloomington 1965, p. 32; Id., «Vorwort,» in Hans Delbrück, Peter Paret, *Krieg, Geschichte, Theorie. Zwei Studien über Clausewitz*, ed. Peter Paret, Miles, Norderstedt 2018, pp. 11–12.

191 Id., *Clausewitz and the State*, *cit*., p. 361.

192 *Ibid*., pp. 352–354, 360; Id., «Introduction to Part One,» in Carl von Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. & transl. Peter Paret, Daniel Moran, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, p. 5; Id., «Clausewitz as Historian,» in Id., *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, p. 133; Id., «Vorwort,» *cit*., p. 14.

attitude when he described the distinction between "military historians" and "military critics," highlighting the deep methodological differences between representatives of the officer corps and academic historians. The two groups have different approaches to sources and the goals of their publications.[193] Furthermore, Paret interpreted Clausewitz's arguments similarly to Delbrück. In cases of disagreement, Paret did not engage in open polemics with Delbrück; rather, he treated Delbrück with the respect due a classic.

Strachan emphasized the contributions of the Berlin professor to the development of Clausewitz research, even disagreeing with some of his conclusions about changes in the art of war at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[194] Conversely, Delbrück and Strachan share a similar view of various aspects of Clausewitz's primary work. The historical context and the lack of belief in the universal applicability of the Prussian general's arguments are crucial to their interpretation. While Delbrück attempted to dispel misconceptions perpetuated by German officers, Strachan treated the various interpretations emerging over the last 150 years as subjects of study in their own right.

It is also impossible to ignore the works of Werner Hahlweg. Despite being a member of the Waffen-SS and the NSDAP, he continued researching German military history at various academic institutions after World War II. From 1962 to 1986, he served as chairman of the German Society for Military Studies (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Heereskunde). After his death, the annual Werner Hahlweg Prize for Military History and Defense Studies (Werner-Hahlweg-Preis für Militärgeschichte und Wehrwissenschaften) was named after him.[195]

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193 Id., «Hans Delbrück on Military Critics and Military Historians,» *MA*, 30, 3, 1966, pp. 148–152.

194 Hew Strachan, «Clausewitz and the Dialectics of War,» in Hew Strachan, Andreas Herberg-Rothe (ed.), *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, pp. 18, 22–25; Id., *Carl von Clausewitz's* On War*: A Biography*, Grove Press, New York 2007, pp. 17–18.

195 Military Sciences, https://www.german-foreign-policy.com/en/news/detail/5620 [10.06.2023]. The award was given from 1992 to 2012, which is until the patron's "forgotten" past was made public. A similar reservation about the alleged ignorance of German historians regarding Hahlweg's shameful past was expressed by: Hew Strachan, «The Elusive Meaning and Enduring Relevance of Clausewitz,» in Hal Brands (ed.), *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2023, pp. 128–129.

His studies on Clausewitz resulted in a critical edition of his works and two monographs. His unquestionable achievements in the field of research secured Hahlweg a strong position among German academics after 1945.[196] As before the war, Hahlweg marginalized Delbrück's research and cited polemicists from within the army ranks instead.[197] His choice is significant because Hahlweg's academic standing remains strong and clearly influences how issues are presented today. Despite its recognized substantive value, Hahlweg's work directly continues the German nationalist and militaristic tradition, which Delbrück openly opposed. Therefore, Hahlweg's attitude toward the "father of military history" is not random.

The same interpretation of the attitude of Hahlweg and others like him is supported by the work of German scholars who emigrated to the United States because they were critical of the Third Reich.[198] Delbrück was featured prominently in their publications, contributing to a temporary surge of interest in his work at U.S. universities after World War II.[199] Felix Gilbert (1905–1991) included Delbrück and Otto Hintze among the two prewar German historians who correctly understood Clausewitz's ideas.[200]

In the field of German historical studies, Ritter, an anti-Nazi dissident, served as a counterbalance to Hahlweg. As early as 1936, when Ritter published a biography of Friedrich II, he challenged the slogans of the propaganda of the time,[201] greatly aided by his use of Delbrück's studies.[202] In 1943, Ritter emphasized that Clausewitz's work provides insight not only into how to conduct warfare

196 Werner Hahlweg, *Carl von Clausewitz. Soldat, Politiker, Denker*, Muster-Schmidt, Göttingen 1957; Id., *Preußische Reformzeit und revolutionärer Krieg*, Mittler, Berlin 1962.

197 Id., *Carl von Clausewitz*, *cit*., pp. 83–108. Delbrück's name appeared only once in the chapter dedicated to the reception of Clausewitz's work. It was mentioned very generally as one of the authors who preceded later publications: *ibid*., p. 101.

198 Ralf Pröve, «La nouvelle histoire militaire,» *cit*., p. 233.

199 Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America 1815–1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1994, pp. 177, 180–181.

200 Felix Gilbert, «From Clausewitz to Delbrück and Hintze: Achievements and Failures of Military History,» *JSS*, 3, 3, 1980, p. 13.

201 Gerhard Ritter, «The German Professor,» *cit*., p. 246. See also Id., *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, 1, University of Miami Press, Coral Gables 1969, pp. 19, 32.

202 Id., *Frederick the Great*, *cit*., pp. 130–133 (English translation).

but also into the political responsibility of initiating conflict.[203] Regarding the controversy over Friedrich II's alleged influence on Moltke's military successes, Ritter criticized the interpretation of the War History Department. He also denied the existence of a "strategy of annihilation" concept in Clausewitz's writings.[204] Ritter then differed from Delbrück, who based his division of strategies into two types on his reading of *Vom Kriege* and engaged in polemics against Friedrich II's superiority over Napoleon.[205] Nevertheless, Ritter considered Delbrück to be the foremost expert on the subject.

Geschichte der Kriegskunst ends chronologically with the Napoleonic Wars, though Delbrück had initially planned to include a chapter on Moltke's wars. However, the outbreak of World War I prevented him from carrying out this plan, forcing him to comment on current events instead.[206] Subject matter concerning the period after 1815 found its way into his other publications. The main drawback of dividing the material was the disruption of conceptual continuity. As a result of Delbrück's decision, his seminal work received limited interest from authors dealing with nineteenth-century military history. Consequently, the historiographical concept he promoted is unfamiliar to them, and the "father of military history" simply became just another author—sometimes even less important than the authors of memoirs and staff analyses who were treated with reverent awe.

Also in this area, Delbrück's dispute with the military historical service ceased to be of great significance over the years, especially since comparisons between Friedrich II and Napoleon have fallen out of favor among authors dealing with the second half of the nineteenth century. Monographs by Michael Howard (1922–2019),[207] Arden Bucholz (who contributed greatly to the promotion of Delbrück's work; 1936–),[208] Dennis Showalter (1942–2019),[209] and

203 Id., «Die Lehre Carls von Clausewitz von politischen Sinn des Krieges,» *HZ*, 167, 1, 1943, pp. 41–65.

204 *Ibid*., p. 53.

205 *Ibid*., p. 53 n. 1. Repeating the stance: Id., *The Sword and the Scepter*, 1, *cit*., p. 62.

206 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 4, *cit*., [pp. VIII–IX].

207 Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870–1871*, Hart-Davis Ltd., New York 1961.

208 Arden Bucholz, *Moltke and the German Wars, 1864–1871*, Red Globe, New York 2001.

209 Dennis E. Showalter, *The Wars of German Unification*, 2nd ed., Bloomsbury, London–New

Geoffrey Wawro (1960–)[210] may serve as evidence. From their perspective, technological changes, particularly the role of rail transport, were much more important. The change in the approach to nineteenth-century warfare can be seen as a kind of normalization, as historians no longer feel the need to prove the "genuinely Prussian" origins of Moltke's successes, a sentiment tinged with nationalism. Thus, the motivations behind Delbrück's polemics were forgotten, and the conflict, which lasted for years and had serious consequences for those involved, simply became a historical curiosity.

Interest in Delbrück's work increases when the Schlieffen Plan and Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen's monograph on the Battle of Cannae are discussed. Schlieffen's monograph is closely linked to the discussion about Moltke's legacy and elaborates on his famous war plan. Schlieffen did not hide his inspiration from Delbrück's publications. However, there is a lack of deeper reflection on Schlieffen's understanding of the events of 216 BCE and the conditions necessary for a double envelopment to succeed. In his seminal book on the Prussian/German "strategy of annihilation," Jehuda L. Wallach (1921–2008) briefly mentioned Schlieffen's intellectual dependence on Delbrück's interpretations and Delbrück's duplication of Clausewitz's theories.[211] Along with the "discovery" of *Vom Kriege* after Moltke's victorious wars, Wallach concluded that Schlieffen's "double envelopment" strategy has roots in Clausewitz's legacy.[212]

Lieutenant Colonel Terence Zuber (1948–) presented a different, more elaborate perspective. He acknowledged the connections between Clausewitz's and Delbrück's work, but in his view, Delbrück had reinterpreted the original to develop his creative perspective on the "strategy of annihilation" problem rather than simply reproducing Clausewitz's idea.[213] Thus, Delbrück had a decisive

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210 Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War: Austria's War with Prussia and Italy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996; Id., *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870–1871*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003.

211 Jehuda L. Wallach, *Das Dogma der Vernichtungsschlacht. Die Lehren von Clausewitz und Schlieffen und ihre Wirkung in zwei Weltkriegen*, dtv, München 1970, pp. 76, 262.

212 *Ibid*., pp. 62–64, 109–124.

213 Terence Zuber, *Inventing the Schlieffen Plan: German War Planning, 1871–1914*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002, p. 8.

influence on the Schlieffen Plan.[214]

According to Zuber, the plan was based on incorrect assumptions. Delbrück repeatedly mentioned the importance of considering other factors in conducting the course of wars, including political, social, economic, and cultural aspects. Therefore, applying ancient tactical concepts to twentieth-century strategic solutions was bound to end in failure. The inability to properly understand Delbrück's ideas was a "burden" on the Schlieffen Plan from the very beginning.[215]

Later, Zuber published a book analyzing Moltke's strategic plans within the context of their implementation. He concluded that Moltke's adherence to Clausewitz's ideas was a historiographical myth caused by the famous 1890 interview. In Zuber's opinion, Moltke preferred a command model based primarily on reacting to changing situations.[216] Additionally, even Wallach acknowledged members of the Great General Staff's general unfamiliarity with the "canonically" cited Clausewitz's work.[217]

Controversies surrounding Zuber's interpretations of the German war plan and its execution in 1914 have overshadowed the intriguing insights he offers into the intellectual relationships between Clausewitz, Delbrück, Moltke, and Schlieffen. Currently, the interdependencies among these figures are not of much interest, as the discourse on Prussian/German military affairs in the second half of the nineteenth century has been dominated by militarism and event history, sometimes viewed within the context of international politics. Delbrück is often viewed through the lens of his conflict with the military historical service and his influence on Schlieffen, which gives him a different status than for academic scholars working on earlier periods. Many authors have omitted Delbrück because he did not give the fourth volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* its originally intended form, leaving readers without a coherent vision of the post-Napoleonic period. Unfortunately, Zuber's accurate interpretation of Delbrück's basic historiographical assumptions in the context of Schlieffen's ideas

214 *Ibid*., pp. 8, 27–29, 31–32.

215 *Ibid*., pp. 16–17.

216 Id., *The Moltke Myth: Prussian War Planning 1857–1871*, University Press of America, Lanham 2008.

217 Jehuda L. Wallach, *Das Dogma der Vernichtungsschlacht*, *cit*., pp. 284–289; Id., «Misperceptions of Clausewitz' *On War* by the German Military,» *JSS*, 9, 2–3, 1986, pp. 213–238.

also did not gain popularity or recognition among researchers at the turn of the twentieth century either.

5.4. Cross-sectional studies and syntheses

After 1945, few authors dared to write comprehensive, chronological syntheses of military history. Multi-author textbooks, handbooks, and companions became more prevalent instead. Delbrück's wide range of interests was uncommon among historians today, who typically specialize in a narrow thematic area. Case studies have gained popularity because they illustrate a given phenomenon through selected examples. Using this method relieves authors of the need to analyze the multitude of sources originating from different cultural circles. Some argue that conducting basic research is pointless because the scope of military organization, weaponry, and tactics has already been thoroughly explored. Others opted to combine military studies with the "new humanities" to move away from the traditional history of the nineteenth century. Thus, the arrival of the 2000s put an end to extensive syntheses by a single author. However, several important studies engaging with Delbrück's work appeared in previous years.

In response to *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, the Soviets published a three-volume work by General Yevgeny (Evgeny) Razin (1898–1964) between 1939 and 1940.[218] It is certainly not a successful book. Razin lacked Delbrück's erudition, and subordinating the narrative to the Stalinist version of the Marxist paradigm resulted in numerous historiographical distortions. Years later, Razin considered his work to be of poor quality and incapable of replacing Delbrück's main publication.[219] Nevertheless, it gained widespread popularity in Eastern Bloc countries, thanks to strong promotion by the ruling regimes.[220]

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218 Polish edition: Ewgienij Razin, *Historia sztuki wojennej*, 1–3, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1958–1964.

219 Summary of a personal conversation with Razin: Tadeusz Pióro, «Wstęp,» in Michael Howard, *Wojna w dziejach Europy*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1990, p. 17.

220 The strong promotion of Soviet historians in the German Democratic Republic made Razin seem more important and modern than German classics: Karl Christ, *Klios Wandlungen. Die deutsche Althistorie vom Neuhumanismus bis zur Gegenwart*, Beck, München 2006, p. 116. This had a clear impact on Delbrück's historiographical status.

For Razin, Delbrück was the most outstanding representative of "bourgeois scholarship."[221] Delbrück emphasized his aversion to Marxism and to subordinating military history to practical goals, which contradicted Razin's views.[222] The Soviet author failed to recognize the internal contradiction of criticizing Delbrück for linking military history and political history.[223] Several pages later, Razin cited Vladimir Lenin's (1870–1924) assertion that war is a continuation of politics, following Clausewitz.[224] Given the errors and oversimplifications in the text resulting from a lack of independent source analysis—Razin was a professional officer, not an academic historian—and the primacy of communist ideology, Razin's work is nothing more than a historiographical curiosity today.[225]

The same certainly cannot be said about the work of Howard, one of the most influential military historians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Like Delbrück, Howard served in the army from 1942 to 1945.[226] The two scholars had a similar approach to studying military history. They both viewed military history as a sphere of human activity closely linked to the others.

In Howard's view, students should be aware of the political, social, economic, and cultural contexts of wars.[227] He was cautiously inclined toward the primacy of social factors.[228] His seminar was renowned for putting the idea of uni-

221 Ewgienij Razin, *Historia sztuki wojennej*, 1, *cit*., pp. 5, 75–76.

222 *Ibid*., 1, p. 76. Razin even called Delbrück an "ideologist of the bourgeoisie": *ibid*., 2, p. 26.

223 *Ibid*., 1, p. 76.

224 *Ibid*., p. 9.

225 It is worth noting the titles Razin gave to the individual volumes, which indicate the chronological division criterion he adopted: the dominant forms of production from a Marxist perspective (slave labor, feudalism, and the organization of manufacturing). However, this does not correspond to the stages of development of European military warfare. The aforementioned phenomena were differentiated depending on the geographical area and period. In some parts of Europe, they never gained dominant status.

226 Michael Howard, «The Lessons of History,» in Id., *The Lessons of History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991, pp. 9–10; Id., *Captain Professor: A Life in War and Peace*, Continuum, London–New York 2006, pp. 64–119.

227 Id., «Military History as a University Study,» *History*, 41, 141–143, 1956, p. 184; Id., *War in European History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1976, p. 10.

228 Id., «Military History as a University Study,» *cit*., p. 186; Id., «The Lessons of History,» *cit*., p. 16; Id., «Military history and the history of war,» in Williamson Murray, Richard H. Sinnreich (ed.), *The past as prologue: The importance of history in the military profession*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 16–17. See also Id., «War and Social Change,» in Id., *The Lessons of History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991, pp. 166–176. In his memoirs,

versal history into practice, providing students with the opportunity to examine the issues from multiple perspectives.[229] Delbrück's work was one of Howard's main sources of inspiration.[230] Under Delbrück's influence Howard concluded that the dominant way of describing military history in Great Britain did not meet postwar needs.[231]

Howard's thoughts led to the book entitled *War in European History*, published in 1976.[232] Despite its small size, it became the most widely read work on the topic since World War II. While Howard could be considered a polyhistor, his work demonstrated the impossibility of a single author addressing all relevant issues in European military history from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. The era of specialized collective works was approaching rapidly, yet Howard wrote a well-planned book intended to provide an overview of the military transformations of European warfare without extensive, detailed discussions.[233] Nearly fifty years have passed since the publication of *War in European History*, yet it still remains an essential read for anyone interested in military history.

In the introduction, Howard expressed his belief in the advantages of universal history, which requires studying military affairs within a broad context. As an example of an overly narrow, purely political approach, he mentioned... Delbrück.[234] Howard's surprising statement contradicts his earlier opinions and his

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Howard wrote that military studies should encompass society and its culture as a whole, indicating a greater sensitivity to cultural history: Id., *Captain Professor*, *cit*., p. 145.

229 Hew Strachan, «Michael Howard and the dimensions of military history,» *War in History*, 27, 4, 2020, p. 545.

230 Michael Howard, «Military History as a University Study,» *cit*., p. 186; Hew Strachan, «Michael Howard,» *cit*., p. 544; James E. Kitchen, Stuart Mitchell, «Michael Howard and the Historian's Craft: An Introduction to the Michael Howard Special Issue,» *BJMH*, 8, 2, 2022, p. 20; Vanda Wilcox, «A European History of Michael Howard's *War in European History*,» *BJMH*, 8, 2, 2022, p. 37.

231 Michael Howard, «Military History as a University Study,» *cit*., p. 190; Id., *Captain Professor*, *cit*., p. 145.

232 Id., *War in European History*, *cit*.

233 *Ibid*., p. IX.

234 *Ibid*., pp. IX–X. Repeating the assumptions in the context of the experiences gained from World War II, without mentioning Delbrück's name: Id., «Apologia pro Studia Sua,» in Id., *Studies in War and Peace*, Viking, New York 1971, p. 9; Id., *War and the Nation State. An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 18 November 1977*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1978, pp. 18–19; Id., «The Use and Abuse of Military History,» *Parameters*,

seminarians' recollections. It is difficult to determine the reasons for Howard's change, especially since he did not typically attribute similar limitations to Delbrück in his other publications. Howard's turnaround is even more perplexing because he is considered the first scholar to successfully apply Delbrück's perspective to British historiography,[235] advocating liberation from the limitations imposed by the national approach to history.[236]

Howard later described Delbrück as the "most outstanding military historian"[237] and a pioneer in addressing military issues within a social context.[238] When asked about the practical value of military history, Howard emphasized the uniqueness of each event and the challenges of constructing historical narratives, which often extend beyond simplistic claims about the existence or non-existence of a particular event or phenomenon.[239] He also declared himself a supporter of Ranke's historiographical ideas and felt compelled to deconstruct accumulated myths, including national myths with a military foundation.[240] Ultimately, while Howard acknowledged the potential usefulness of historical studies in officer training, he strongly advocated for the academic model of military historiography established by Delbrück.[241] It is difficult to find more definitive proof of Delbrück's influence on Howard's historical views. Given the proximity of the two scholars, Howard's statement in the introduction to the 1976 synthesis—which has received much more attention than specialized studies and has shaped perceptions of Howard's academic profile—is all the more surprising.

11, 1, 1981, p. 14.

235 See Hew Strachan, «Michael Howard,» *cit*., p. 544.

236 Michael Howard, «The Lessons of History,» *cit*., p. 13; Id., *Captain Professor*, *cit*., pp. 145, 147.

237 Id., «The Use and Abuse,» *cit*., p. 11. A more general highlighting of his merits in this field: Id., rev. *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict*. By Arden Bucholz. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. 1985. xiv + 191, *History*, 71, 232, 1986, p. 295.

238 Id., «Military history,» *cit*., p. 16.

239 Id., «The Use and Abuse,» *cit*., pp. 11–12.

240 *Ibid*., pp. 10–11. Howard's reluctance to use military history for national myth-making was partly influenced by his upbringing in a deeply religious family: Id., *Captain Professor*, *cit*., pp. 1–2, 53.

241 Id., «The Use and Abuse,» *cit*., p. 14.

Michael Howard (1922–2019).

Initially, Howard was optimistic about the prospects for developing military studies,[242] but he eventually realized the danger posed by a group of the Western intellectuals influenced by Marxism and committed to removing military history from academia to fulfill the demands of the Peace Movement.[243] The ongoing dissolution of British research units specializing in military history and the dismissal of academic staff, or forcing them to change their specializations, make Howard's concerns even more valid. In light of the repeated accusations of militarism, colonialism, and nationalism leveled against military historians,[244] Howard's observations take on an additional sinister tone bearing no relation to a concern for developing historical knowledge.

For Martin van Creveld (1946–), Delbrück also left a strong mark on the writing of military history. Creveld considers Delbrück to be one of the creators of a new approach to military history, departing from the absolutization of one's personal experience and focusing on the practical usefulness of publications.[245] Creveld noticed the reason for many officers' attacks on Delbrück, which was their sense of superiority over civilian scholars, especially since Delbrück had effectively challenged established beliefs.[246] In his syntheses on logistics, the culture of war, and command, Creveld often drew on Delbrück's findings regarding the pre-Napoleonic era.[247] Creveld approached his work in a rather traditional manner, but with a clear tendency to draw broad conclusions, much like his German predecessor.

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242 Id., «Military history,» *cit*.

243 Id., «Weapons and Peace,» in Id., *The Causes of War and other essays*, 2nd ed., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1984, pp. 271–272; Id., «Introduction,» in Id., *The Lessons of History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991, p. 3. Similarly: John A. Lynn, «Clio in Arms: The Role of the Military Variable in Shaping History,» *JMH*, 55, 1, 1991, pp. 84, 94–95.

244 As early as 2000, Howard responded to the prejudices against military history with the seemingly obvious argument that it is also part of history, leading to an expansion of knowledge about human history, whatever it may be: Michael Howard, *Captain Professor*, *cit*., pp. 13–14.

245 Martin van Creveld, «Thoughts on Military History,» *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 4, Military History, 1983, p. 562; Id., *The Culture of War*, Presidio, New York 2008, p. 180.

246 Id., *The Changing Face of War: Combat From the Marne to Iraq*, 2nd ed., Presidio, New York 2008, pp. 13–14.

247 Id., *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1977; Id., *Command in War*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1985; Id., *The Culture of War*, *cit*.

John Keegan (1934–2012), one of the founders of the "new military history,"[248] referenced Delbrück in his seminal monograph, *The Face of Battle*. In Keegan's opinion, there are two ways of describing military issues. The first is a spectacular yet intellectually barren focus on "great commanders" and "decisive battles," which is the Anglo-American tradition. The second approach involves painstakingly sifting through sources to obtain the broadest possible picture of events, in accordance with the best academic traditions. Keegan attributed the latter approach to Delbrück, considering him the true founder of academic military studies. After 1976, Keegan's view had yet to become dominant in Great Britain.[249]

It may seem paradoxical that Keegan, associated with the "new military history," wrote the aforementioned book partly in opposition to new trends that will be discussed further in the next chapter. Keegan emphasized the importance of military organization and the army's role in the political and social systems. He paid attention to the ultimate purpose of the armed forces, which is to participate in combat. Therefore, military historians cannot abstract themselves from battles and the art of war, the essence of their specialty.[250] Given this assumption, Keegan's high regard for Delbrück likely stemmed from his focus on *Kriegskunst*, especially since *The Face of Battle* builds upon Delbrück's research combined with pioneering studies in military psychology.

Keegan was supported by Howard, another researcher considered a co-creator of the "new military history,"[251] whose links to Delbrück's historiographical concept were previously discussed. Younger historians usually did not bother tracing their specialty's origins, referring directly to the "new military history." John A. Lynn (1943–) is a clear example. In a monograph that directly continues Delbrück's research,[252] Lynn cited his name only once, via Paret's book.[253]

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248 See Chapter 6.

249 John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, Viking, New York 1976, pp. 54–56, 62.

250 *Ibid*., pp. 18, 27–29; Id., «The Historian and Battle,» *International Security*, 3, 3, 1978–1979, p. 140.

251 Michael Howard, *Captain Professor*, *cit*., pp. 130–131, 145; Id., «Military history,» *cit*., p. 20.

252 John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*, Basic Books, Boulder 2003, pp. XIV–XVII.

253 *Ibid*., p. 371 n. 101.

Considering the relentless pursuit of novelty driven by the need to demonstrate constant innovation in publications for evaluations of all kinds, the lack of interest in the work of an author so fundamental to Howard, Paret, and Keegan is puzzling.

An even more incomprehensible case is the work of Cathal J. Nolan (1956–). He attempted to portray the transformations in European military affairs as a sine wave oscillating between the desire for a decisive battle and a strategy aimed at exhausting the enemy.[254] His narrative essentially returns to the division between *Niederwerfungsstrategie* and *Ermattungsstrategie* presented by Delbrück. However, Nolan did not mention Delbrück even once.[255] Was Nolan's omission due to a common lack of knowledge among non-European historians regarding the evolution of European historiography? He apparently believes in the originality of his conclusions without recognizing their origins. This issue is exacerbated by the common practice in the Anglo-American cultural sphere of citing English publications almost exclusively, often resulting in the neglect of substantial contributions from German, French, and Italian scholars.[256]

Black took a different stance. While he did not typically reference Delbrück's work, his publishing efforts resulted in numerous syntheses intended for specialists and amateurs alike. His efforts warrant a brief comment.

Black undoubtedly acknowledges the importance of Delbrück's achievements and contributions to the development of military history at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[257] In a monograph on the evolution of military historiography, Black characterized Delbrück as the first civilian scholar to successfully challenge the dominance of the military historical service[258]

254 Cathal J. Nolan, *The Allure of Battle: A History of How Wars Have Been Won and Lost*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017.

255 *Ibid*., pp. 1–17.

256 *Ibid*., pp. 18–37.

257 Jeremy Black, rev. *Delbrück's Modern Military History*. Edited and translated by Arden Bucholz. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Pp. xix + 244, *Journal of European Studies*, 28, 109–110, 1998, p. 201; Id., *Rethinking Military History*, Routledge, London–New York 2004, pp. 32, 176, 187–188; Id., *Military Strategy: A Global History*, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 2020, pp. 12, 170.

258 Id., *Rethinking Military History*, *cit*., p. 187.

and advocate for a critical approach to sources.[259] However, as with many other non-English-speaking authors, Delbrück is absent when it comes to strictly historical issues. Reading Black's works might give one the impression that German or French historiography once played a significant role in shaping the discourse, yet today it is no longer important. While it would be difficult to agree with this position (which Black does not promote, which should be clearly emphasized), the complete dominance of the English language in the academic world will force many researchers from other countries to publish exclusively in English. Even worse, Black's example may unintentionally lead to the further marginalization of German classics.

Increasing specialization naturally eliminates serious attempts to create one-person syntheses. This trend favors collective works, in which authors cite literature directly related to their specific topics, over cross-sectional publications. The evolution of historiography relegates Delbrück to the role of a "prologue hero," whose findings are usually mentioned in the context of antiquity and the Middle Ages, as well as the circumstances surrounding the development of the Schlieffen Plan. The dominance of Anglo-American historiography further marginalizes the achievements of the "father of military history," which likely will continue until an author "discovers" Delbrück's work and is surprised to find that academic military history existed before 1945, free from aggressive nationalism and without connotations with military institutions.

259 *Ibid*., pp. 32, 188.

Chapter 6

Delbrück and the "new military history"

In 2006, Luigi Loreto (1963–) offered an interpretation concerning the evolution of historiography dedicated to ancient military issues. He characterized the "new military history" as a creative development of Hans Delbrück' ideas. The "novelty" of the "new military history" was said to stem from its proponents' unfamiliarity with the Berlin professor's work. Consequently, they cannot contextualize the perception of military matters as a part of the broader historical process. This unawareness often gives them a sense of superiority over "traditional military historians," who are allegedly connected to the limited imagination and political entanglements of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century authors.[1]

Christopher Bassford (1953–) had previously made a similar observation to Loreto's, regarding the modern era.[2] In a recently published review article on the military historiography, Virgilio Ilari (1948–) supported the views of Loreto and Bassford.[3] Their voices cannot be ignored, especially in an era dominated

1 Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare del mondo antico. Prospettive retrospettive*, Jovene, Napoli 2006, pp. 173, 183, 205, 215–217. Some parts of this chapter was previously published as the following papers: Michał N. Faszcza, «Cztery drogi, jeden cel. „Nowa historia wojskowości" i formy jej propagowania,» in Krzysztof Garczewski, Anna Garczewska (ed.), *Narracje historyczne we współczesnym świecie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2021, pp. 280–300; Id., «*The face of battle* ponad 40 lat później, czyli kilka uwag na marginesie wydania polskiego przekładu dzieła Johna Keegana,» *Klio. Czasopismo po*święcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym, 53, 2, 2020, pp. 259–273.

2 Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America 1815–1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1994, p. 206. Cf. Ulrich Raulff, «Politik als Passion. Hans Delbrück und der Krieg in der Geschichte,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. XV.

3 Virgilio Ilari, «Storia delle battaglie tra storia militare e Histoire-Bataille,» *Rivista di studi militari*, 7, 2018, p. 252.

by Anglo-American historiography. Due to language limitations, its representatives are often unaware of the roots of their own specialty. In the United States and, to a lesser extent, in Great Britain, some authors view Delbrück more as a military theorist than a historian.[4]

Recognizing the recurrence of certain historiographical ideas prompts an examination of the "new military history" from the perspective of the constitutive features of individual "schools" and their precursors' connections to Delbrück's work. After 1945, many scholars believed that certain research trends had become obsolete and could not address the challenges of the new era.[5] In fact, scholars rarely work in isolation and typically build on previous findings.

The "new military history" is difficult to define because there is no universally accepted definition for this collective term referring to a variety of historical attitudes. Its characteristics must necessarily remain general. As Peter Paret noted, it is a research orientation adopted by some scholars rather than a coherent program resulting from top-down decisions.[6] Thus, the "new military history" can be defined as a Western European trend emerging in the 1950s and 1960s. It is rooted in the need to integrate military issues with the political,

4 Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, *cit*., pp. 87, 178. E.g., Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, pp. 326–353 (partly); Mark J. Redlinger, *Hans Delbrück and Clausewitz's Culminating Points*, School of Advanced Military Studies. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth 1988; Craig Stockings, «German Influences on the Evolution of Strategic Thought,» *Australian Defence Force Journal*, 174, 2007, pp. 98–99; Francis J. H. Park, «Hans Delbrück and the 2001–2021 War in Afghanistan,» *Military Strategy Magazine*, 9, 3, 2024, pp. 48–52. In my opinion, the situation will only worsen over time. For example, a recent study on two types of strategies (annihilation and attrition) did not mention Delbrück even once, despite the fact that he introduced these strategies to historiography: Williamson Murray, «The Strategy of Decisive War versus Strategy of Attrition,» in Hal Brands (ed.), *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2023, pp. 495–521. Similarly: Cathal J. Nolan, *The Allure of Battle: A History of How Wars Have Been Won and Lost*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017.

5 Michael Howard, «Military History as a University Study,» *History*, 41, 141–143, 1956, p. 190; Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *Armed Forces & Society*, 7, 2, 1981, p. 310; Nicola Labanca, «I due *Makers of Modern Strategy*: guerra e società, storia e scienza sociali,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Guerra e strategia nell'età contemporanea*, Casa, Genova 1992, p. 12.

6 Peter Paret, «The New Military History,» *Parameters*, 21, 1, 1991, p. 10.

social, economic, and cultural aspects. The "new military history" utilizes the contributions of social scientists, particularly sociologists and psychologists, as well as economists.[7] The analogy to Delbrück's idea is striking; however, current challenges resemble the historiographical questions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in some respects. Methodological advancements have made military history increasingly resistant to the influence of new research trends, necessitating a prompt and appropriate response.[8]

During Delbrück's time, the distinction between history and sociology was often blurred, as seen in the works of Max Weber, Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), and Marcel Mauss (1872–1950). This state of affairs also affected military history, but civilian scholars' involvement in research and their use of cultural analogies or statistical methods raised strong emotions. Delbrück often emphasized the importance of understanding military issues within a broader

7 André Corvisier, «Aspects divers de l'histoire militaire,» *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 20, 1, Études d'histoire militaire (XVII^{e}–XX^{e} siècles), 1973, pp. 1, 6; Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *cit*., p. 299; Colin Jones, «New Military History for Old? War and Society in Early Modern Europe,» *European Studies Review*, 12, 1, 1982, pp. 97–98; Martin van Creveld, «Thoughts on Military History,» *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 4, Military History, 1983, p. 555; Nuno Severiano Teixeira, «A história militar e a historiografia contemporânea,» in *Actas do I Colóquio. Para uma Visão Global da História Militar*, Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar, Lisboa 1990, p. 58; John W. Chambers II, «The New Military History: Myth and Reality,» *JMH*, 55, 3, 1991, pp. 395–396, 398, 405–406; Peter Paret, «The New Military History,» *cit*., p. 10; Nicola Labanca, «I due *Makers of Modern Strategy*,» *cit*., pp. 9–11; Id., «Dieci anni di «war and society»,» *Passato e presente*, 11, 30, 1993, pp. 132–133, 136–137; Id., «Ascesa e declino di un classico della storia militare,» *Contemporanea*, 7, 1, 2004, pp. 127–128, 132–133; Laurent Henninger, «La nouvelle histoire-bataille,» *Espaces Temps*, 71–73, 1999, p. 44; Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, Routledge, London–New York 2004, pp. 35–59; Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare*, *cit*., pp. 173–250; Matthew Hughes, William J. Philpott, «Introduction,» in Eid. (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2006, pp. 3–4; Joanna Bourke, «New Military History,» in Matthew Hughes, William J. Philpott (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2006, p. 258; Stephen Morillo, Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, Polity Press, Cambridge–Malden 2006, pp. 39–47; Mark Moyar, «The Current State of Military History,» *The Historical Journal*, 50, 1, 2007, p. 227; Roberto M. Citino, «Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction,» *The American Historical Review*, 112, 4, 2007, p. 1079; Virgilio Ilari, «Per una epistemologia della storia militare,» *Nuova Antologia Militare*, 1, 0, 2020, p. 11.

8 Michael Howard, «Military History as a University Study,» *cit.*, p. 190; Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *cit.*, p. 299; John A. Lynn, «The Embattled Future of Academic Military History,» *JMH*, 61, 4, 1997, pp. 777, 783; Stephen Morillo, Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, *cit*., p. 39.

context, a goal he felt he had most fully achieved in the second volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*.[9] His assessment was primarily due to the lack of development of permanent military structures among the Germanic peoples for a long time. Even the emergence of professional warbands did not lead to the marginalization of the levy. The characteristics of Germanic armies reflected the characteristics of Germanic society. A similar situation occurred with the third volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, which was dedicated to the Middle Ages.

Within the framework of the "new military history," four main currents are typically identified: the "war and society" or "army and society," the "army as a society," the "face of battle," and the "cultural history of warfare." Therefore, Loreto's view is highly probable at first glance. Delbrück was the first military historian to emphasize the importance of social and cultural history, and he primarily studied the tactical dimension of battle, exactly like "face-of-battlers."

Nevertheless, the initial changes were based on the principles of the "*Annales* School" rather than on Delbrück's writings. The strong emphasis on socioeconomic history in France, a direct result of Marxist influences, led to the conviction of the necessity of developing a new approach to describing military issues.[10] Raoul Girardet's (1917–2013) sociological book, which examined the social origins of French soldiers from 1815 to 1939, may have provided additional inspiration.[11] Soon after, André Corvisier, a specialist in French military history of the Enlightenment period, followed in Girardet's footsteps.[12] Corvis-

9 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 2, *Die Germanen*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, [p. IX].

10 André Corvisier, «Aspects divers de l'histoire militaire,» *cit.*, pp. 1–2; Bernhard R. Kroener, «Vom »extraordinary Kriegsvolck« zum »miles perpetuus«. Zur Rolle der bewaffneten Macht in der europäischen Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit. Ein Forschungs- und Literaturbericht,» *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, 43, 1988, pp. 147–149; Nicola Labanca, «I due *Makers of Modern Strategy*,» *cit*., p. 19; Id., «Dieci anni di «war and society»,» *cit.*, pp. 129, 132; Jean Delmas, «L'histoire militaire en France depuis 1945,» in André Corvisier, Dumitru Preda (ed.), *Guerre et société en Europe. Perspectives et nouvelles recherches*, Europa Nova, Bucarest 2004, p. 248; Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare*, *cit*., pp. 10–11.

11 Raoul Girardet, *La société militaire dans la France contemporaine (1815–1939)*, Pion, Paris 1953.

12 Main works: André Corvisier, *Les Généraux de Louis XIV et leur origine sociale*, Yvert et Cie, Amiens 1959; Id., *L'armée française, de la fin du XVII^e siècle au ministère de Choiseul. Le Soldat*, 1–2, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1964; Id., *Les Contrôles de troupes de*

ier is considered the creator of the "army and society" trend because he established a model replicated by subsequent generations of authors.[13]

Corvisier was not an uncritical supporter of the methodology promoted by members of the "*Annales* School." In his view, the dominance of the "*Annales* School" strongly hindered the development of military history.[14] He opposed the quantitative method of studying armed conflicts because it originated in polemology, a way of studying wars that he disagreed with. Corvisier believed that understanding wars requires considering the social and cultural context of human activity, a perspective largely ignored by polemologists.[15]

Over time, the study of mentalities has become more highly valued in France. As a result, military history has also adopted a focus on the attitudes and motivations of individuals and units.[16] Corvisier's perspective gained the natural extensions, strengthened by the rising popularity of the "cultural turn" in historiography.[17]

Along with French historians, Michael Howard promoted studying the relationship between the army and society.[18] Because of his hostility towards Marx-

l'Ancien Régime, État-major de l'armée de terre. Service historique, Paris 1969. The culmination of Corvisier's many years of research is the book: Id., *Armées et sociétés en Europe de 1494 à 1789*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1976.

13 Colin Jones, «New Military History for Old?,» *cit*., p. 98; Bernhard R. Kroener, «Vom »extraordinary Kriegsvolck«,» *cit*., pp. 147, 161; Nicola Labanca, «I due *Makers of Modern Strategy*,» *cit*., pp. 16, 20; Antonio Espino López, «La historia militar. Entre la renovacion y la tradicion,» *Manuscrits*, 11, 1993, pp. 222–223; Philippe Contamine, «L'histoire militaire,» in François Bédarida (ed.), *L'histoire et le métier d'historien en France 1945–1995*, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris 1998, p. 361; Jean-Pierre Bois, «André Corvisier. La réhabilitation de l'histoire militaire,» *Dix-septième siècle*, 4, 269, 2015, pp. 577–580; Vanda Wilcox, «A European History of Michael Howard's *War in European History*,» *BJMH*, 8, 2, 2022, p. 40.

14 André Corvisier, «Aspects divers de l'histoire militaire,» *cit.*, p. 2. Similar: Martin van Creveld, «Thoughts on Military History,» *cit*., p. 552; Jean Delmas, «L'histoire militaire en France,» *cit*., p. 247; Vanda Wilcox, «A European History,» *cit*., p. 39.

15 André Corvisier, «L'étude de la guerre entre la sociologie et l'histoire,» *Revue historique*, 257, 2, 1977, pp. 362–364.

16 André Martel, «Le renouveau de l'histoire militaire en France,» *Revue historique*, 245, 1, 1971, p. 107.

17 See André Corvisier, *La guerre. Essais historiques*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1995.

18 Michael Howard, «Military History as a University Study,» *cit.*, pp. 184, 186; Id., *War in Eu-*

ism[19] and the current prevalence of English, he is often cited as a co-creator of the "war and society" movement.[20] However, determining the scope and scale of their mutual influences would require further in-depth studies. Howard himself admitted to having limited knowledge of French[21] and only moderate familiarity with the achievements of the "Annalists."[22] In his memoirs, he considered himself the most dedicated popularizer of the "war and society," though not its creator.[23]

Surprisingly, despite promoting such an attitude, Howard—unlike Corvisier—never wrote a work being its practical realization. At most, a short synthesis from 1976 can be considered an introduction to further research. Consequently, David C. Skaggs (1937–) questioned Howard's association with the "new military history," arguing that Howard did not utilize sociology and instead preferred a traditional approach inherited from prewar authors.[24]

While Skaggs' observation is difficult to dispute, Howard's influence on changing research perspectives seems to have manifested differently. Thanks to

ropean History, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1976, p. X; Id., «The Lessons of History,» in Id., *The Lessons of History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991, p. 16.

19 Michael Howard, *Captain Professor: A Life in War and Peace*, Continuum, London–New York 2006, pp. 51, 125. Paradoxically, the periodization of military history contained in Howard's synthesis is based on Marxist criteria: Id., *War in European History*, *cit*.

20 Peter Paret, «The History of War,» in Felix Gilbert, Stephen R. Graubard (ed.), *Historical Studies Today*, Norton & Company, New York 1972, p. 376; Bernhard R. Kroener, «Vom »extraordinary Kriegsvolck«,» *cit*., p. 151; Nuno Severiano Teixeira, «A história militar,» *cit*., p. 65; Nicola Labanca, «I due *Makers of Modern Strategy*,» *cit*., pp. 16, 19–20; Id., «Dieci anni di «war and society»,» *cit.*, pp. 129, 132; Id., «Ascesa e declino,» *cit*., pp. 127–128; Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare*, *cit*., pp. 10, 178; Virgilio Ilari, «Storia delle battaglie,» *cit*., pp. 218–220; James E. Kitchen, Stuart Mitchell, «Michael Howard and the Historian's Craft: An Introduction to the Michael Howard Special Issue», *BJMH*, 8, 2, 2022, pp. 13, 17; Vanda Wilcox, «A European History,» *cit*., pp. 38, 40, 47. Howard's support for the described trend: Michael Howard, «Military history and the history of war,» in Williamson Murray, Richard H. Sinnreich (ed.), *The past as prologue: The importance of history in the military profession*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 16–17. A general note that every military phenomenon should be understood within its social context: Id., «Military History as a University Study,» *cit*., p. 186.

21 Id., *Captain Professor*, *cit*., p. 21.

22 *Ibid*., p. 207.

23 *Ibid*., p. 145.

24 David C. Skaggs, «Michael Howard and the Dimensions of Military History,» *MA*, 49, 4, 1985, p. 182.

his efforts, the Department of War Studies was established at the King's College London in 1962. At the time, it was the second British civilian research unit focusing on military studies after the University of Oxford.[25] There, he encouraged students and colleagues to be open to social issues, though he himself did so only to a limited extent.[26] Even before 1962, he organized seminars under the banner of "war and society" to demonstrate the need for a unit specializing in war studies.[27]

The decisive significance lies in the memories of Howard's students because a scholar's influence often extends beyond the content of their publications. Hew Strachan clearly advocated for Howard's connections to the "new military history." Thanks to Howard, new students of military affairs were able to become acquainted with an approach absent from older works and therefore impossible to acquire independently.[28] Considering Howard's similarities to Delbrück, as mentioned in the previous chapter, it would not be an exaggeration to say about the successful implementation of Delbrück's view in the British postwar historiography.

The concept of "war and society" (or "army and society") became popular because it allowed military historians to study military issues at a time when they were widely accused of promoting pro-war attitudes.[29] Taking a social perspective also allows one to view the army as more than an isolated institution. We could effectively search for answers to questions such as how recruits adapt to a new environment and how their habits and perception of war and killing influence their military service. The civilian population ceased being a backdrop for war narratives and often became the main subject of the narrative. In

25 Michael Howard, *Captain Professor*, *cit*., p. 161; Vanda Wilcox, «A European History,» *cit*., p. 47; David Morgan-Owen, Michael Finch, «The Unrepentant Historian: Sir Michael Howard and the Birth of War Studies,» *BJMH*, 8, 2, 2022, pp. 55–76.

26 Hew Strachan, «Michael Howard and the dimensions of military history,» *War in History*, 27, 4, 2020, p. 545; David Morgan-Owen, Michael Finch, «The Unrepentant Historian,» *cit*., p. 59.

27 Michael Howard, *Captain Professor*, *cit*., p. 147.

28 Hew Strachan, «Michael Howard,» *cit*., p. 545. Similarly: James E. Kitchen, Stuart Mitchell, «Michael Howard,» *cit*., pp. 13, 17. See also Michael Howard, «Military History as a University Study,» *cit*., p. 184.

29 Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare*, *cit*., pp. 177–178, 180; Virgilio Ilari, «Per una epistemologia,» *cit*., pp. 7, 11.

this regard, Pieri's work on the Italian Wars is a prime example.[30] He played a similar role in Italy as Corvisier and Howard did in France and Great Britain, respectively.[31] Studies of the "war and society" are particularly popular in relation to the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, likely due to the abundance and nature of available sources, as well as interest in the origins of modern military solutions.

For years, research on the relationship between the civilian population and the army has been successfully conducted in Poland. Unlike other components of the "new military history," the "war and society" has been widely accepted within the Polish historical community, largely due to the longstanding tradition of social history studies rooted in the interwar period.[32]

Unlike Corvisier's followers, proponents of the British model are reluctant to turn to sociology. The discipline has a different status in the British Isles than in France. The highly influential "*Annales* School" never gained prominence in Great Britain, partly due to the British academic community's reluctance toward Marxism. Considered a co-founder of the "war and society" approach, Howard discreetly used the findings of the "*Annales* School" members while refraining from openly affirming their work. Stanislav Andreski (Stanisław Andrzejewski; 1919–2007) had a more significant impact on British historiography in some areas for a time. Through his sociological research, he attempted to outline models of the relationships between state power, society, and the army.[33] His esoteric language made his ideas difficult to understand, though the method he introduced for determining the percentage of society involved in the war effort is still widely used.

The concept of "war and society" (or "army and society") is similar to, yet more recent than, the "army as a society." The latter is based on the idea that

30 Piero Pieri, *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana*, Einaudi, Torino 1952.

31 Nicola Labanca, «Piero Pieri, ovvero dei risultati e delle difficoltà della storia militare in Italia,» in Fabio De Ninno, *Piero Pieri. In pensiero e lo storico militare*, Le Monnier, Firenze 2019, pp. XVIII–XIX.

32 In particular: Wacław Tokarz, *Sprzysiężenie Wysockiego i noc listopadowa*, Gebethner i Wolff, Warszawa 1925; Id., *Insurekcja warszawska 17 i 18 kwietnia 1794*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Lwów 1934.

33 Stanislav Andreski, *Military Organization and Society*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London–New York 1954.

unique social bonds are formed within the armed forces, transcend the formal organizational model and hierarchical relationships. It also requires taking into account the social backgrounds of soldiers, which directly influence their behavior and perception of their reality, while simultaneously shaping how the army functions. Given the research areas possible thanks to the "army as a society" concept, the movement's roots in sociology are not surprising, although the first attempts at this type of writing appeared before World War I.[34]

Girardet is often cited as a precursor to the concept of the "army as a society," alongside Morris Janowitz (1919–1988)[35] and Samuel P. Huntington (1927–2008).[36] However, identifying the individuals who introduced it to the field of history is a significantly greater challenge. Corvisier most likely did so.[37] The "army as a society" is certainly the only current within the "new military history" not related to the work of Delbrück or other German authors from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Delbrück's letters from the Franco-Prussian War make no mention of the social stratification of soldiers or the resulting behavioral differences, even among regular officers. The new identity derived from his social function as a soldier apparently took precedence over his original identity during the war. Nevertheless, the "father of military history" emphasized the connections between the military and the social system, aligning him with the "war and society" perspective.[38]

John Keegan was not convinced by the gradual shift in military history toward social history. After accepting a position at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, he began emphasizing the importance of wartime experiences in shaping army identity.[39] He concluded that battles are crucial to understanding

34 E.g., Jean Morvan, *Le soldat impérial (1800–1814)*, 1–2, Pion, Paris 1904; Charles Oman, *Wellington's Army, 1809–1814*, Arnold, London 1912.

35 Morris Janowitz, *Society and the Military Establishment*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York 1959; Id., *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, Free Press, Glencoe 1960.

36 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1957.

37 André Corvisier, *L'armée française*, *cit*.; Id., *Les Contrôles de troupes*, *cit*.

38 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 2, *cit*., [p. IX].

39 John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, Viking, New York 1976, pp. 16–22; Id., *A History of Warfare*, Knopf, London 1993, pp. XIII–XVI.

military history because, even though soldiers usually do not fight, their organization and weaponry are subordinate to their main purpose: participation in battle.[40] Keegan's assumption brought the art of war and the individual experiences of combatants, as recorded in personal sources such as memoirs, diaries, and letters, back into the spotlight. Two important influences on Keegan were Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq (1821–1870),[41] a pioneer of combat psychology, and General S. L. A. (Samuel Lyman Atwood) "SLAM" Marshall (1900–1977), who adapted Ardant du Picq's ideas to the American context.[42]

Keegan's reflections resulted in the book *The Face of Battle*, published in 1976. The book sparked a new research trend of the same name.[43] It became one of the most important works of military history from the second half of the twentieth century. Using three examples of battles: Agincourt (1415), Waterloo (1815), and the Somme (1916), Keegan demonstrated how to overcome source limitations by understanding the specifics of the weapons used, human and animal behavior, and the psychology of combatants. Unlike many of his followers, Keegan avoided far-reaching analogies, focusing instead on data related to the described era, including the results of field studies.

Keegan explored traditional themes using an interdisciplinary approach highly valued today. Delbrück laid the groundwork for such studies—a fact often overlooked by modern scholars. He applied comparative analysis to incorporate information about universal characteristics, such as permissible loads for soldiers and their marching capabilities, sometimes even too boldly.

Keegan attempted to describe the combatants' perspective within the context of their specific formation. For instance, the situational awareness of a British infantry soldier fighting at Waterloo was significantly limited by smoke, the

40 Id., *The Face of Battle*, *cit*., pp. 18, 27–29; Id., «The Historian and Battle,» *International Security*, 3, 3, 1978–1979, p. 140.

41 Id., *The Face of Battle*, *cit*., pp. 70–72. Ardant du Picq was the author of two small volumes published together after his death: [Charles] Ardant du Picq, *Études sur le combat*, Hachette, Paris 1880.

42 Id., *The Face of Battle*, *cit*., pp. 72–74. Marshall was the author of a well-known book on military psychology. The book significantly influenced the modification of American soldier training: S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command*, „The Infantry Journal"/Morrow & Company, Washington, D.C. 1947.

43 Johne Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, *cit*.

smell of gunpowder, gunfire, fatigue, injuries (e.g., from the recoil of a rifle when firing), and comrades in close proximity. Considering the tactics used at the time, his ability to react depended strictly on orders issued by superiors who were subject to similar limitations. A great number of stimuli provided psychological relief by excluding the soldier from the decision-making process, but it also resulted in a lack of up-to-date knowledge of the events. Arthur Wellesley, Lord Wellington (1769–1852), preferred to exercise direct control over each formation's actions, requiring rapid movement and information transfer.[44] His approach was simply a reaction to the unique characteristics of the Napoleonic battlefield, though different command patterns could also have been employed.

Keegan's analytical approach required an understanding of an organization's structure, armament, and tactics. This led him to classic works in military history, usually written outside the Anglo-American cultural sphere.[45] The German historiographical tradition was an obvious choice for Keegan,[46] who combined it with in-depth studies of personal sources, paying particular attention to accounts by non-officers. Great Britain has many soldiers' personal accounts dating back to the Napoleonic Wars, which partly influenced Keegan's selection of battles.

Keegan's method is nothing more than *Sachkritik*, which, among other things, involves using external knowledge to verify or supplement source information.[47] His method's main innovation lies in shifting the focus from the commander's perspective ("commander's battle") to the soldier's perspective ("soldier's battle"), as well as drawing on the findings of military psychologists. Keegan expanded on Delbrück's research, giving it a new dimension by modifying some of the basic assumptions, as he noted in the introduction to *The Face of Battle*.[48] Many proponents of the "new military history" disregarded Keegan's explanation, incorrectly viewing his work as breaking from the tradition of writing about military history.

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44 *Ibid*., pp. 153–195.

45 *Ibid*., pp. 54–73.

46 *Ibid*., pp. 54–56, 62.

47 Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, *cit*., p. 180; Nicola Labanca, «Le guerre, la guerra: alcuni libri recenti,» *Giano*, 21, 1995, pp. 207–208; Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare*, *cit*., pp. 194, 205, 217.

48 John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, *cit*., pp. 54–56, 62.

According to many scholars, Keegan rescued military history from a crisis caused by the emotions commonly associated with the recently concluded World War II and the dominance of the "*Annales* School." By offering new insights into well-explored themes, Keegan preserved the achievements of his predecessors and revitalized the unpopular field of research.[49]

Without denying Keegan's achievements, two points are worth noting. First, such statements minimize the role played by Howard, who established academic military history in Britain. Without Howard's work, Keegan would have had a much harder time starting his research. The notion of a decline in military history is therefore greatly exaggerated. Second, not all "Annalists" were hostile toward military issues, as discussed in the previous chapter. The emergence of the field of "war and society" is partly due to them. Therefore, Keegan's impact on historiography should be viewed as more nuanced: he primarily influenced its direction by giving a voice to often anonymous soldiers and making readers aware of their emotions and physical limitations, which also influence the course of a battle.

The extent to which Delbrück was aware of the usefulness of combat psychology in historical research is still debated. Perhaps he did not rely on psychological aspects because, in his view, the possibility of effectively applying *Sachkritik* did not extend to the emotional side of fighting due to the significant temporal distance between researchers and the eras they study. However, Delbrück's letters to his mother during the Franco-Prussian War reveal his recognition of the importance of psychological factors. In a letter dated August 11, 1870, he wrote about how soldiers became less enthusiastic about attacking after experiencing combat and how seeing unburied bodies was depressing.[50] On August 19, he emotionally recalled bullets whistling around him, disorganized

49 Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *cit*., p. 306; Nuno Severiano Teixeira, «A história militar,» *cit*., pp. 65–66; Laurent Henninger, «La nouvelle histoire-bataille,» *cit*., pp. 38–39; Antonio Espino López, «La renovación de la historia de las batallas,» *Revista de historia militar*, 91, 2001, pp. 162–163; Nicola Labanca, «Ascesa e declino,» *cit*., pp. 132–133; Joanna Bourke, «New Military History,» *cit*., p. 265; Stephen Morillo, Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, *cit*., p. 43.

50 Hans Delbrück, «Letters from the Franco-Prussian War,» in Arden Bucholz (ed. & transl.), *Delbrück's Modern Military History*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1997, p. 45.

German troops under enemy fire, and instances of panic.[51] On September 5, he wrote that only discipline prevented the Prussian soldiers from scattering in panic under enemy fire.[52] His war experiences helped Delbrück understand why the much smaller Greek forces were able to defeat the Persian army.[53] Thus, Delbrück's perspective may be similar to Keegan's in many ways. Although the Berlin professor intuitively incorporated wartime experiences into his scholarly work, he did not usually emphasize individual feelings in his publications.

Since *Sachkritik* was a new concept in academia, Delbrück anticipated instances in which his method would be questioned. Introducing elements of psychology would have discredited him in the eyes of many of his colleagues, who were not ready for such "revolutionary" ideas. The times in which he lived demanded a rejection of excessive innovation. Furthermore, every author is rooted in the intellectual culture of his/her era. Military psychology only developed under the influence of World War I experiences.[54] In Delbrück's time, it was still in its infancy. Nevertheless, he cannot be accused of overlooking the influence of psychological factors on the course of battle; his analysis of the Battle of Marathon clearly indicates otherwise.

Similar to *Sachkritik*, the "face of battle" had the greatest impact on researchers studying the last suitable era in terms of the preserved source base: antiquity. The scarcity of sources demanded creativity and the overcoming of limitations through in-depth methodological reflection. This is particularly true for classicists focusing on the history of Greek *poleis*. Researchers of ancient Greece engaged in discussions about recreating hoplite battle experiences on a large scale and embraced experimental archaeology.[55] Keegan acknowledged

51 *Ibid*., pp. 45–46.

52 *Ibid*., p. 49.

53 *Ibid*.

54 Richard A. Gabriel, *No More Heroes: Madness and Psychiatry in War*, Hill and Wang, New York 1987, pp. 72–75, 97–112, 132; Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1995, pp. 43–88; Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2001, pp. 5–72.

55 E.g., Peter Krentz, «The Nature of Hoplite Battle,» *Classical Antiquity*, 4, 1, 1985, pp. 50–61; Id., *The Battle of Marathon*, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 2010; Id., «Hoplite Hell: How Hoplite Fought,» in Donald Kagan, Gregory F. Viggiano (ed.), *Men of Bronze: Hoplite Warfare in Ancient Greece*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2013, pp.

their awe-inspiring efforts and incorporated some of their findings in a later book.[56] Classicists interested in Roman history also joined the debate, albeit with less enthusiasm, creatively developing Keegan's method.[57]

One might wonder if classicists' interest in the "face of battle" trend was "prepared" by their prior adoption of Delbrück's research perspective. Using

134–156; John Lazenby, «Killing Zone,» in Victor D. Hanson (ed.), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, Routledge, London–New York 1993, pp. 87–109; Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities*, Bloomsbury, London–New York 2004, pp. 153–197; Victor D. Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, 2nd ed., University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles 2009; Paul M. Bardunias, Fred E. Ray Jr., *Hoplites at War: A Comprehensive Analysis of Heavy Infantry Combat in the Greek World, 750–100 BCE*, McFarland & Company, Jefferson 2016, pp. 61–103; Fernando Echeverrìa, «The Nature of Hoplite Warfare,» in Waldemar Heckel et al. (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Warfare*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken 2021, pp. 75–87; Lawrence Tritle, «Battle Trauma in Ancient Greece,» in Waldemar Heckel et al. (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Warfare*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken 2021, pp. 301–311; Roel Konijnendijk, Paul M. Bardunias, «The Face of Battle at Plataiai,» in Andreas Konecny, Nicholas Sekunda (ed.), *The Battle of Plataiai 479 BC*, Phoibos, Wien 2022, pp. 211–242; Jason Crowley, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite: The Culture of Combat in Classical Athens*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012. Note an exceptionally important paper dedicated to the interpretive pitfalls associated with the overly liberal application of psychological theories in Greek military history research: Everett L. Wheeler, «Greece: Mad Hatters and March Hares,» in Lee L. Brice, Jennifer T. Roberts (ed.), *Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World*, Regina Books, Claremont 2011, pp. 53–104.

56 John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, *cit*., pp. 244–263.

57 Adrian K. Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War 100 BC–AD 200*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996; A. D. Lee, «Morale and the Roman experience of battle,» in Alan B. Lloyd (ed.), *Battle in Antiquity*, The Classical Press of Wales, Swansea 1996, pp. 199–217; Philip Sabin, «The Mechanics of Battle in the Second Punic War,» in Tim Cornell, Boris Rankov (ed.), *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, Institute of Classical Studies, London 1996, pp. 59–79; Id., «The Face of Roman Battle,» *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 90, 2000, pp. 1–17; Gregory Daly, *Cannae: The experience of battle in the Second Punic War*, Routledge, London–New York 2002; Catherine M. Gilliver, «Battle,» in Philip Sabin, Hans van Wees, Michael Whitby (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, 2, *Rome from the late Republic to the late Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 122–157; Yann Le Bohec, «Face of battle for soldiers,» in Id. (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army*, 2, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden–Oxford 2015, pp. 391–397; Graeme Ward, «The Roman battlefield: individual exploits in warfare of the Roman Republic,» in Werner Reiss, Garrett G. Fagan (ed.), *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 2016, pp. 299–324; Michał N. Faszcza, «A bridge too far? Military psychology and Roman Republican warfare,» *Palamedes*, 13, 2019–2020, pp. 55–63; Łukasz Różycki, *Battlefield Emotions in Late Antiquity: A Study of Fear and Motivation in Roman Military Treatises*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2021.

personal accounts left by war participants may simply not be as revolutionary for authors dealing with the early modern period. However, the popularity of Keegan's book seems contradictory, especially since publications presenting individuals' perspectives—often referring to aspects previously considered unimportant or unreliable—only began to appear after 1976.

Nine years later, Richard Holmes (1946–2011), a brigadier and lecturer at the same academy, followed in Keegan's footsteps by publishing a book combining psychological and sociological approaches.[58] Together with Keegan, Holmes produced a thirteen-part BBC television series titled *Soldiers: A History of Men in Battle* (1985), which popularized the "new military history" among non-specialists. After the series concluded, a book summarizing its conclusions was published.[59] Thanks to their efforts, the "face of battle" became a permanent fixture in popular culture, inspiring filmmakers to create films depicting the experiences of ordinary soldiers. The financial success of movies such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) or *Black Hawk Down* (2001) further popularized Keegan's vision of military history.[60]

The influence of popular culture should not be underestimated, as it often distorts perceptions of war and military service. Unfortunately, images created primarily by the film industry affect even the content disseminated by historians.[61]

Some perceived Keegan's focus on soldiers as a disregard for the role of commanders during battles. In his next book, *The Mask of Command*, Keegan responded to their arguments.[62] The work was not as successful as *The Face of Battle*, probably because Keegan ventured into familiar territory where his critics felt much more confident. The representativeness of the examples chosen, especially Adolf Hitler, is also questionable. Unlike his previous work, there were no references to Delbrück's publication, as Keegan only described one leader mentioned in *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*.

58 Richard Holmes, *Firing Line*, Cape Ltd., London 1985.

59 John Keegan, Richard Holmes, *Soldiers: A History of Men in Battle*, Hamilton Ltd., London 1985.

60 Michał N. Faszcza, «Cztery drogi, jeden cel,» *cit*., pp. 293–294.

61 Raymond Callahan, «Three Faces of Military History,» *The Army Historian*, 3, 1984, p. 7.

62 John Keegan, *The Mask of Command*, Viking, New York 1987.

A few years later, Keegan wrote another book about the impact of culture on how war is perceived and conducted.[63] It was a polemic against the claims of General Carl von Clausewitz and his followers, who linked war directly to state politics. Although Delbrück initially shared Clausewitz's perspective, he ultimately viewed war as a product of culture and considered military history as part of cultural history.[64]

Unfortunately, Clausewitz never claimed that his arguments were universal. They only pertained to post-Napoleonic Europe, so Keegan's arguments were misplaced. At most, the target of Keegan's criticism could be Clausewitz's supporters who apply his concepts to any era or geographical area. To complete the picture of misunderstandings, it is worth mentioning Bassford's polemical response.[65] Although it is based on an analysis of key Clausewitzian terms, it does not directly address Keegan's book. Keegan was simply trying to point out something obvious, yet unrelated to Clausewitz: some military cultures are not solely determined by politics.

The main message of Keegan's work, which applies the methods of cultural history to military history, is more important than the series of errors resulting from overemphasizing Clausewitz's literary activity. Thus, the "cultural history of warfare" becomes the fourth and so far final branch of the "new military history."

Victor D. Hanson,[66] John A. Lynn,[67] John E. Lendon,[68] and Martin van Crev-

63 Id., *A History of Warfare*, *cit*.

64 Hans Delbrück, *Weltgeschichte. Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Berlin 1896–1920*, 1, *Das Altertum (bis 300 n. Chr.)*, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1924, p. 24; Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, *Die Neuzeit*, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, [p. IX].

65 Christopher Bassford, «John Keegan and the Grand Tradition of Trashing Clausewitz: a Polemic,» *War in History*, 1, 3, 1994, pp. 319–336. In this regard, another review of Keegan's book has significantly more impact: Andreas Herberg-Rothe, «Primacy of culture in a modern world? John Keegan's critique demands a sophisticated interpretation of Clausewitz,» *Defense Analysis*, 17, 2, 2001, pp. 175–186.

66 Victor D. Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise to Western Power*, New York 2001.

67 John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*, Basic Books, Boulder 2003; Id., «Discourse, Reality, and the Culture of Combat,» *The International History Review*, 27, 3, 2005, pp. 475–480.

68 Jon E. Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, Yale University

eld[69] soon followed in Keegan's footsteps. Cultural history is an interesting and inspiring field for researchers who are reluctant to combine historiography with sociology and psychology. These disciplines employ a conceptual framework not always applicable to past eras. Even worse, they create the illusion of the universality of human feelings and behaviors. While the influence of culture on the perception of military service and the conduct of wars is not a new discovery, as reflected in Delbrück's work, cultural history provides additional interpretive possibilities regarding attitudes toward killing, the influence of religious beliefs on war participation, how different social groups perceive soldiering, and culturally ingrained expectations of a commander's behavior on the battlefield.

Drawing analogies to phenomena occurring in other eras or periods is not always justified because understanding human actions requires examining sources from a specific time and cultural context. It is no wonder that some researchers have enthusiastically embraced the "cultural history of warfare,"[70] especially since it clearly resembles the history of mentalities explored by the "*Annales* School." Despite previously favoring the paramount importance of social history, Howard also came to appreciate the "cultural turn" in military history.[71]

The "cultural history of warfare" is often overlooked because it lacks the allure of the "scientific revolution." While it may be less spectacular than the "face of battle," it allows for in-depth research based on various categories of sources. It also helps to move away from the belief in the equal treatment of killing a human, regardless of time, culture, social group, etc. The "cultural history of warfare" is a valuable addition to Keegan's first book, providing an opportunity to introduce new arguments about the strategies identified by Delbrück.

Sabina Loriga (1955–) is the author of an extremely important work in the field of cultural history. Using the eighteenth-century Piedmontese army as an example, she demonstrated that studying military history through regulations

Press, New Haven–London 2005.

69 Martin van Creveld, *The Culture of War*, Presidio, New York 2008.

70 John Shy, «The Cultural Approach to the History of War,» *JMH*, 57, 5, 1993, pp. 13–26; John A. Lynn, «The Embattled Future,» *cit*., pp. 787–789; Id., «Discourse, Reality, and the Culture,» *cit*., p. 475; Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, *cit*., pp. 55–58; Roberto M. Citino, «Military Histories Old and New," *cit*., pp. 1084–1085.

71 Michael Howard, *Captain Professor*, *cit*., p. 145.

and documents alone can be misleading without comparing them to narrative sources. Attempts to implement Prussian regulations in Piedmont failed completely because the new solutions did not align with the culture of the officers or recruits. The regulations remained in effect for many years, which could lead to the erroneous conclusion on the adequacy of patterns borrowed from the north.[72] Loriga's book also fits into the "army and society" and the "army as a society" trends, serving as an example of modern historiography free from periodically fashionable theories.

The emergence of the "new military history" is closely linked to British and French scholarship. However, despite barely being able to compete with European researchers until then, American historians played a significant, if not decisive, role in its further development. As Raymond Callahan (1938–) put it, the United States simply did not have an "American Delbrück" during the interwar period.[73] Event history, also known as "drum and trumpet history," or biographies of great commanders, prevailed for a long time.[74]

The situation changed with the Vietnam War (1955–1975), especially with the increase in military involvement in the conflict since 1964. A sudden surge of interest in military history emerged at American universities in the 1960s, leading to the establishment of the first research units specializing in military history in the following decade.[75] The emotional impact of the Vietnam War on

72 Sabina Loriga, *Soldats. Un laboratoire disciplinaire : l'armée piémontaise au XVIII^e siècle*, Mentha, Paris 1991.

73 Raymond Callahan, «Three Faces of Military History,» *cit*., p. 8.

74 Peter Paret, «The History of War,» *cit*., pp. 379–380; Maurice Matloff, «The Nature and Scope of Military History,» in Russell F. Weigley (ed.), *New Dimensions in Military History: An Anthology*, Praesidio, San Rafael 1975, p. 405; Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *cit*., p. 302; Raymond Callahan, «Three Faces of Military History,» *cit*., p. 8; John W. Chambers II, «The New Military History,» *cit*., p. 395; Roberto M. Citino, «Military Histories Old and New," *cit*., p. 1079.

75 Peter Paret, «The History of War,» *cit*., p. 381; Id., «The New Military History,» *cit*., pp. 16–17; John A. Lynn, «Military History in the Classroom: A Strategy for Enrollments,» *MA*, 43, 4, 1979, p. 202; Peter Karsten, «The "New" American Military History: A Map of the Territory, Explored and Unexplored,» *American Quarterly*, 36, 3, 1984, p. 389; Ronald H. Spector, «Military History and the Academic World,» *Army History*, 19, 1991, pp. 4–5; John W. Chambers II, «The New Military History,» *cit*., p. 397; Matthew Hughes, William J. Philpott, «Introduction,» *cit*., p. 3; Joanna Bourke, «New Military History,» *cit*., p. 261; Stephen Morillo, Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, *cit*., p. 41; Edward M. Coffman, «The

American society was very profound, and many scholars began to see the obvious connection between military issues and other dimensions of human activity. Thus, academic military history was born in the United States and was immediately linked to the latest research trends.[76] Once again, Marshall's influence on new historiographical trends is worth mentioning.

Despite their undeniable achievements, military historians are not highly regarded in the United States.[77] From the beginning, cooperation with the U.S. Army representatives was marked by a lack of understanding of research without practical value. Different research priorities resulted in a duality in the historiographical narrative (the "new military history" versus the "drum and trumpet history").[78] Additionally, the usefulness of teaching military history in the context of dynamic technological development was questioned.[79] The outbreak of "culture wars" in universities has led to renewed calls to remove military issues from educational programs.[80] The situation remains unstable, forcing scholars to conduct studies covering various areas of knowledge about the past to find employment in institutions unrelated to military history.

The specific conditions under which academic military history emerged in the United States led to a different developmental path. It resulted in a lack of familiarity with the classics of European historiography and a disregard for publications written in languages other than English.[81] Despite the efforts of Paret,

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Battle for Military History: Success or Failure?,» in Richard S. Kirkendall (ed.), *The Organization of American Historians & the Writing & Teaching of American History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, p. 107.

76 Ronald H. Spector, «Military History,» *cit.*, pp. 1, 6–7.

77 Gordon A. Craig, «Political History,» *Daedalus*, 100, 2, 1971, p. 327; Jay Luvaas, «Military History: An Academic Historian's Point of View,» in Russell F. Weigley (ed.), *New Dimensions in Military History: An Anthology*, Praesidio, San Rafael 1975, p. 20; John A. Lynn, «Clio in Arms: The Role of the Military Variable in Shaping History,» *JMH*, 55, 1, 1991, pp. 83–84; Id., «The Embattled Future,» *cit.*, pp. 777–778; Peter Paret, «The New Military History,» *cit*., p. 12; Roberto M. Citino, «Military Histories Old and New," *cit*., p. 1070.

78 Dennis E. Showalter, «A Modest Plea for Drums and Trumpets,» *MA*, 39, 2, 1975, p. 72; Maurice Matloff, «The Nature and Scope,» *cit*., p. 405; Raymond Callahan, «Three Faces of Military History,» *cit*., p. 8.

79 Ronald H. Spector, «Military History,» *cit*., pp. 2–3.

80 John A. Lynn, «Clio in Arms,» *cit*., pp. 84, 94–95; Id., «The Embattled Future,» *cit*., pp. 778, 782; Edward M. Coffman, «The Battle for Military History,» *cit*., p. 109.

81 Peter Paret, «Clausewitz: A Bibliographical Survey,» *World Politics*, 17, 2, 1965, p. 272.

Arden Bucholz, and Gordon A. Craig (1913–2005), Delbrück remains virtually unknown in the United States, and his contributions to the "new military history" remain unrecognized. The dominance of works produced within the Anglo-American cultural sphere causes Delbrück's achievements to be increasingly forgotten and treated as part of a disreputable ("militaristic and colonial") past. One example is Doyne Dawson's (1941–) review of Loreto's book. Dawson failed to acknowledge Delbrück's contributions to the "new military history," but he did highlight the classical approach to footnoting and the absence of references to Social Darwinist theories. Dawson also noted the relevance of ancient military studies to peace studies.[82] While these are not the most significant issues raised by Loreto, they are the most interesting to Dawson, representing a particular perspective on historical scholarship. Based on Dawson's case, military historiography only emerged when it appeared in American universities, and the "new military history" is military history itself. Consequently, European historiography before 1945 is unworthy of attention.

The pursuit of novelty combined with ignorance of the classics is not an exclusively American problem. In fact, it is likely a defining feature of historiography. Loreto's argument is based on knowledge of pre-war works, but his perspective feels refreshing. The genetic connections between individual authors' works lend plausibility to Loreto's conclusions, indirectly establishing Delbrück as the inspiration for the "new military history." Although the Berlin professor ultimately did not establish his own historical school and his circle of students remained limited, the ideas he promoted proved to be incredibly enduring. They continue to inspire today's proponents of the "new military history," most of whom are unaware of this fact.

While Loreto focused on presenting the connections between the "new military history" and Delbrück's work, other authors questioned the novelty of the described trend more generally. The accusations against the partisans of the "new military history" are usually the same: their unfamiliarity with the classics leads many of them to a conviction of breaking with traditional historiography and giving the specialty a new face characterized by a reluctance toward war and a promotion of military virtues. However, if they had consulted standard works

82 Doyne Dawson, «The Return of Military History?,» *History and Theory*, 47, 2008, pp. 597–606.

of historiography, mainly German ones, they would have discovered that social, economic, and cultural factors were emphasized even before World War II.[83]

The position of the critics seems too extreme. Abstracting from the political context of the "new military history" as presented by some authors, only the second and third volumes of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* by Delbrück align with the frameworks of the new trends. Including the social sciences in military history research has significantly broadened its scope and yielded new insights, which would not have been possible without the efforts of many generations of "traditional" historians. Nevertheless, the real breakthrough was made by the representatives of the "new military history." Three of the described currents—the "face of battle," the "army and society," and the "cultural history of warfare"—stem directly from Delbrück's writings. However, they differ, particularly with regard to attributing greater agency to soldiers and analysis of the impact of conflicts on their social environment.

Recently, there have been attempts to expand the "new military history" to include sensory history. Mark M. Smith (1968–) is a pioneer in this field who specializes in the history of the American Civil War.[84] Recently, an attempt was made to apply sensory history to antiquity, which is not surprising given the classicists' traditional openness to new historiographical trends.[85] Which is not surprising, in Delbrück's time, sensory history would not have existed in any form. The emergence of new trends is another reason why the "new military history" is considered a truly new approach.

In the 1930s, the subordination of military history research to the deeply ideological concept of *Wehrgeschichte* (a term referring to the political emancipation of the nation) resulted in the near-complete disappearance of military history in Germany after World War II. Fear of a resurgence of militarism and chauvinistic nationalism made it difficult for military historians to justify their

83 Walter E. Kaegi Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography,» *cit.*, p. 309; Peter Paret, «The New Military History,» *cit.*, pp. 10–18; Nicola Labanca, «Dieci anni di «war and society»,» *cit.*, p. 130.

84 Mark M. Smith, *The Smell of Battle, the Taste of Siege: A Sensory History of the Civil War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014.

85 Conor Whately, *A Sensory History of Ancient Warfare: Reconstructing the Physical Experience of War in the Classical World*, Pen & Sword, Barnsley 2021.

specialty. Many leading scholars, drawing on the uncontroversial legacy of Delbrück, chose to emigrate (mainly to the United States), further hindering the revival of German academic studies on military issues. Today, little has changed.[86] Despite being well known in Germany, the achievements of the proponents of the "new military history" have had little impact on the development of historiography there.[87]

One more thing common to Delbrück's work and the proponents of the "new military history" is the struggle to preserve their specialty. The legitimacy of military history was first questioned at the end of the nineteenth century, and it continues to be questioned in the early twenty-first century. The reluctance toward military history is often attributed to the humanistic mission of universities, with which the study of the military supposedly conflicts. However, military matters have dominated historical sources since the beginning.[88] If we abandon the study of warfare, the subject will be trivialized and misunderstood, inevitably leading societies to make fateful decisions. As Charles Oman rhetorically asked, should the fear of illness justify the abolition of medicine?[89]

Because of the close relationship between armed conflicts and social phenomena, the "new military history" could lead to a broader acceptance of military history as such. It certainly fulfills Delbrück's unwritten testament. For him, one of the foundations of the newly formed specialty was to free it from the limitations imposed by the "general staff perspective."

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86 Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, *cit*., pp. 177, 180–181; Ralf Pröve, «La nouvelle histoire militaire de l'époque moderne en Allemagne. Approches, problèmes et perspectives,» in André Corvisier, Dumitru Preda (ed.), *Guerre et société en Europe. Perspectives et nouvelles recherches*, Europa Nova, Bucarest 2004, p. 233.

87 Bernhard R. Kroener, «Vom »extraordinary Kriegsvolck«,» *cit*., pp. 160–174; Ralf Pröve, «La nouvelle histoire militaire,» *cit*., pp. 233–236.

88 Richard Glover, «War and Civilian Historians,» *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 18, 1, 1957, p. 85; Jay Luvaas, «Military History,» *cit*., p. 19; Id., «The Great Military Historians and Philosophers,» in Robert W. Coakley, John E. Jessup Jr. (ed.), *A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History*, Center of Military History. United States Army, Washington, D.C. 1988, p. 59; Martin van Creveld, «Thoughts on Military History,» *cit*., p. 549; Raymond Callahan, «Three Faces of Military History,» *cit*., p. 7.

89 Charles Oman, «A defence of military history,» in Id., *Studies in the Napoleonic Wars*, Methuen & Company Ltd., London 1930, p. 24; Id., «A plea for military history,» in Id., *On the writing of history*, Dutton and Company, London 1939, pp. 159–160.

Chapter 7

The reception of Delbrück's ideas in Poland

7.1 The interwar period (1918–1939)

In the reborn Republic of Poland, military history developed in close connection with three dominant trends:

a) a focus on national history;
b) the popularity of the neo-romantic movement, which was strongly promoted by Szymon Askenazy (1865–1935) and his circle;
c) close connection between military history and research and publishing institutions of the Polish Army.[1]

All of the above phenomena contradicted the idea advocated by Hans Delbrück, who viewed military issues as part of universal history, written mostly by civilian historians. According to him, military questions should be analyzed in an emotionally unbiased way, regardless of the needs of state bodies. These differences in approach led to methodological discrepancies, exacerbated by the initial reliance of Polish military education on the French model,[2] which was only loosely connected to academic standards at the time.[3] Another problem was

1 Michał N. Faszcza, «Narodziny „polskiej szkoły" historii militarnej a wojskowość antyczna. W poszukiwaniu tożsamości badawczej (część 1),» *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, 21, 2, 2022, pp. 221–235.

2 Stanisław Rutkowski, *Zarys dziejów polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1970, pp. 95, 96, 104; Dariusz S. Kozerawski, *Wyższe szkolnictwo wojskowe w Polsce w latach 1947–1967*, Neriton, Warszawa 2005, p. 26; Aneta Niewęgłowska, Lech Wyszczelski, *Szkolnictwo wojskowe kadry zawodowej w Polsce do 1939 roku*, Napoleon V, Oświęcim 2014, pp. 8–9, 75, 82, 91, 97, 99, 127.

3 Philippe Contamine, «L'histoire militaire,» in François Bedarida (ed.), *L'histoire et le métier d'historien en France 1945–1995*, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris 1998, p. 361. The emergence of academic military history in France dates back to the postwar period: André Corvisier, «Aspects divers de l'histoire militaire,» *Revue d'histoire moderne et con-*

the lack of a Polish translation of Delbrück's seminal work, which hindered the dissemination of his ideas despite many authors being fluent in German.

Contrary to Delbrück's view, leading Polish military historians of the interwar period were professional military officers,[4] which contributed to the belief that military history should be the domain of authors with military experience.[5] Furthermore, during the initial development stage (i.e., until 1926), academic scholars did not widely embrace the newly established historical specialty. They could pursue more general research goals and offer broader cognitive perspectives if they adapted content to combat training programs and military educational requirements. Their reluctance posed a significant obstacle to the advancement of military history.

The potential of Polish military historiography gradually emerged under the strong influence of two officers with previous academic experience: Colonel Wacław Tokarz (1873–1937) and General Marian Kukiel (1885–1973).[6] While maintaining a decisive impact on the military historical service, they attempted to instill some academic patterns in the army, naturally taking its different tasks and working methods into account. However, the dominance of Polish Army institutions in research and publishing led to the prioritization of practical goals. As a result, the prevailing pattern reflected the rules inherited from the nineteenth century, representing a step backward compared to Delbrück's achievements.

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temporaine, 20, 1, Études d'histoire militaire (XVII^{e}–XX^{e} siècles), 1973, pp. 1–3; Laurent Henninger, «La nouvelle histoire-bataille,» *Espaces Temps*, 71–73, 1999, p. 44; Jean Delmas, «L'histoire militaire en France depuis 1945,» in André Corvisier, Dumitru Preda (ed.), *Guerre et société en Europe. Perspectives et nouvelles recherches*, Europa Nova, Bucarest 2004, p. 249.

4 Marian Kukiel, «Prace historyczne Sztabu Generalnego,» *PW*, 21, 1924, pp. 47–64; Id., «Dzieje wojskowe,» *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 51, 1937, p. 369; Józef Siemieński, «W sprawie organizacji historji wojskowej. Badacze i archiwa,» *PHW*, 1, 1, 1929, p. 138.

5 Bogdan Jagiełło, «Historycy wojen i wojskowości w latach 1918–1939 (zarys problematyki),» in Jerzy Maternicki (ed.), Środowisko historyczne II Rzeczypospolitej. Materiały konferencji naukowych w Cedzynie i Białymstoku w 1986 i 1987, 2, Uniwersytet Warszawski. Zakład Historii Historiografii i Dydaktyki Historii, Warszawa 1987, pp. 322–323; Benon Miśkiewicz, *Polska historiografia wojskowa. Próba analizy i syntezy*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1996, p. 27.

6 When joining the army, Tokarz was a professor and Kukiel was a doctor.

Colonel Wacław Tokarz (1873–1937).

Polish-specific development in the field of writing military history was reflected in the content of "programmatic" articles, which aimed to define the research task. Tokarz,[7] Kukiel,[8] Major Otton Laskowski (1892–1953),[9] and Colonel Marian Porwit (1895–1988)[10] all emphasized the importance of aligning it with the requirements of the armed forces. In 1926, Tokarz presented a memorandum on organizing historical research in the Polish Army, reiterating his earlier ideas and stressing the validity of maintaining close cooperation with civilian scholars.[11] Two years later, Porwit published Tokarz's memorandum with minor changes as his own work.[12]

The most important contribution to the discussion on the study of military history was a lecture presented by Kukiel at the Fourth General Congress of Polish Historians (IV Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich), held in Poznań in 1925. According to Kukiel, although military experience can be useful for scholars, military history authors should primarily remain historians; a university education therefore provides better skills for understanding the past than

7 [Wacław Tokarz], «Od Redakcyi,» *Bellona*, 1, 1, 1918, pp. 2–3; Id., «Jak studjować historię wojen?,» *Bellona*, 2, 3, 1919, p. 161.

8 Marian Kukiel, «Prace historyczne Sztabu Generalnego,» *cit.*, pp. 51–52; Id., «Nauczanie historji wojskowej (Zadania i zakres),» *Bellona*, 17, 3, 1925, pp. 249–250; Id., «Miejsce historji wojskowej wśród nauk historycznych, jej przedmiot i podział,» in *Pamiętnik IV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Poznaniu 6–8 grudnia 1925*, 1, *Referaty*, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, Lwów 1925, pp. 1–15.

9 Otton Laskowski, «Znaczenie ogólne i wychowawcze historji wojskowości,» *Bellona*, 8, 1, 1922, pp. 2–3, 6, 9; Id., «Zadania pracy nad dawną polską historją wojskową,» in Otton Laskowski, Bronisław Pawłowski, *Badania dawnej polskiej historji wojskowej. Zadania pracy i ogólna charakterystyka źródeł*, Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne, Warszawa 1927, p. 11; Id., «Kilka uwag na marginesie programu nauczania historji wojskowej,» *Bellona*, 29, 2, 1928, pp. 224–227; Id., «W sprawie organizacji historji wojskowej. Odpowiedź dr. Józefowi Siemieńskiemu,» *PHW*, 1, 2, 1929, pp. 290–295; Id., «Historja wojskowa,» in Id. (ed.), *Encyklopedja wojskowa*, 3, *Garigliano – Karabeni*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Wiedzy Wojskowej/Wojskowy Instytut Naukowo-Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1933, pp. 375–376.

10 Marian Porwit, «Drogi wychowania wojskowego,» *Bellona*, 29, 2, 1928, pp. 137–138; Id., *Duch żołnierski (organizacja wychowania żołnierza)*, Główna Księgarnia Wojskowa, Warszawa 1935, pp. 9–22.

11 Piotr Stawecki, «Nieznany memoriał szefa Wojskowego Instytutu Naukowo-Wydawniczego płk. prof. dr. Wacława Tokarza o organizacji pracy naukowej w WP,» *WPH*, 33, 1, 1988, pp. 204–205, 212.

12 Marian Porwit, «Uwagi o pracy naukowej w naszem wojsku,» *Bellona*, 29, 3, 1928, pp. 332–342.

military service does.[13] His position was thus similar to Delbrück's.[14]

Kukiel advocated for understanding military history as part of political history, referencing General Carl von Clausewitz's famous treatise.[15] Adopting Clausewitz's perspective naturally brought Kukiel closer to Delbrück, from whom he borrowed the idea of examining military issues in relation to political, social, economic, and cultural factors.[16] Kukiel also noted that the title of Delbrück's work refers to political history, but his approach is actually more expansive.[17]

During the Fourth General Congress of Polish Historians, Kukiel expanded on material he had previously published in military journals, including the postulates advocated by Delbrück and his supporters. Kukiel's attitude demonstrates his ability to tailor his message to the type of audience and his familiarity with Western discourse.

Kukiel adhered to a different historiographical tradition; supporting Delbrück's concept did not mean he applied it in practice. He was one of Askenazy's students,[18] and his views on studying history were strongly influenced by neo-romanticism. Similarities between the approaches of Askenazy and Kukiel can be attributed not only to Kukiel's upbringing, the atmosphere of his family home, and many years of his involvement in the Polish independence movement.[19] It is difficult to identify a publication in Kukiel's body of work that

13 Marian Kukiel, «Miejsce historji wojskowej,» *cit*., p. 14.

14 *Ibid*., pp. 2–3.

15 *Ibid*., pp. 1–2.

16 *Ibid*., pp. 2–3.

17 *Ibid*., p. 4.

18 After his supervisor's death, Kukiel paid tribute to him, emphasizing the influence of Askenazy's work in awakening the patriotic feelings of the younger generation: Id., «Szymon Askenazy (24 grudnia 1867–22 czerwca 1935),» *PW*, 54, 1935, pp. 312–332.

19 Stanisław Kopański, «Generał Kukiel – żołnierz i historyk wojskowości,» *Teki Historyczne*, 17, 1978–1980, pp. 36–37; Rafał Habielski, «W służbie teraźniejszości. Glosa do twórczości Mariana Kukiela,» in Marian Kukiel, *Historia w służbie teraźniejszości i inne pisma emigracyjne*, ed. Rafał Habielski, Instytut Badań Literackich, Warszawa 1994, pp. 6–7; Janusz Zuziak, *Generał Marian Kukiel 1885–1973. Żołnierz, historyk, polityk*, Ajaks, Pruszków 1997, p. 14; Artur Mękarski, «Szlakiem neoromantycznego optymizmu (myśl historyczna po 1945 r.),» in Rafał Habielski, Marek Jabłonowski (ed.), *Marian Kukiel. Historyk w świecie polityki*, ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2010, pp. 162–179, 197; Janusz Wojtasik, «Młodość i początki działalności polityczno-wojskowej Mariana Kukiela,» in Tomasz Siewierski, Zbigniew Zielon-

fully aligns with Delbrück's ideas. Like most Polish authors, Kukiel tended to describe military issues as largely isolated phenomena, focusing at most on their political context. A clear example of Kukiel's historical attitude can be seen in his synthesis of Polish military history. Though it was extremely important for the development of Polish military historiography during the interwar period, it was written in a very traditional style.[20]

Kukiel adopted Delbrück's method of periodizing military history and applied it to Polish historiography. He used it in a 1928 article and in the aforementioned synthesis to present his perspective on the subject.[21]

Colonel Witold Hupert (1871–1939) had previously employed the same approach, clearly supporting Delbrück's ideas. However, his publications also presented a conservative narrative similar to the "general staff perspective."[22]

Colonel Stanisław Rola-Arciszewski (1888–1953) was likely the author who borrowed the most from Delbrück. Interested in the changes occurring in European warfare, he paid particular attention to different command styles. He was unafraid to address ancient themes, which occupied a significant place in Delbrück's work. In two articles, Rola-Arciszewski introduced Polish readers to the course of the battles he considered to be the most important in ancient history. He primarily relied on the works of Delbrück, Johannes Kromayer, and Colonel Georg Veith.[23] While not entirely original, the articles' value lies in presenting up-to-date research and offering a less schematic view of ancient military history than was typically provided in Poland.

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ka (ed.), *Historia – wojsko – polityka. Marian Kukiel (1885–1973) i jego dzieło*, Wojskowe Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, Warszawa 2019, pp. 75–76. On Askenazy's historiographical views: Krzysztof K. Daszyk, «Szymona Askenazego neoromantyczna apoteoza czynu,» *Studia Historyczne*, 38, 2, 1995, pp. 225–242; Jerzy Maternicki, «Szkoła Szymona Askenazego,» *Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis*, 29, *Studia ad Institutionem et Educationem Pertinentia*, 1, 2005, pp. 96–109; Mariola Hoszowska, «Szkoła Szymona Askenazego,» *Res Historica*, 43, 2017, pp. 127–158.

20 Marian Kukiel, *Zarys historii wojskowości w Polsce*, wyd. 3, Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, Kraków 1929.

21 Id., «O podziale polskiej historji wojskowej na okresy,» *PW*, 24, 1928, pp. 63–81.

22 Witold Hupert, *Historya wojenna polska w zarysie*, Antykwaryat Polski Hieronim Wilder/ Księgarnia Polska, Lwów 1919, p. 11.

23 Stanisław Rola-Arciszewski, «Pierwiastki sztuki wojennej. Część I,» *Bellona*, 26, 1, 1927, pp. 1–41; Id., «Pierwiastki sztuki wojennej. Część II-a,» *Bellona*, 26, 2, 1927, pp. 129–178.

General Marian Kukiel (1885–1973).

Rola-Arciszewski's monograph on the art of command in Western Europe, published in 1934, was the culmination of his studies.[24] Compared to the works of Tokarz and Kukiel, his publication was of lower quality and was heavily influenced by French military literature. Rola-Arciszewski primarily used Delbrück's work to describe ancient, medieval, and Renaissance warfare. Unfortunately, he showed little interest in the historiographical concepts, focusing on specific details instead.

His publications emerged amid the gradual closure of the Polish military institutions to academic models and the promotion of a cult of personality in Polish politics.

A dispute over the course of the Polish-Soviet War (1919–1921) sparked a shift in the evolution of Polish military historiography. The controversy's central figures were Marshal Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935) and Kukiel. Initially, their disagreement resulted in a series of libelous publications against Kukiel. After Piłsudski's armed *coup d'état* in 1926, Kukiel was removed from active military service. A verification committee assessed Kukiel's publications and found no shortcomings on his part, angering Piłsudski and leading him to target some of the committee members. One of them was Tokarz, who was removed from the army in 1927, one year after Kukiel.[25] Consequently, the Polish Army lost two of its most prominent military historians, and General Julian Stachiewicz (1890–1934) was given the task of reorganizing the military historical service. Stachiewicz viewed historiography primarily as a means of shaping the army's

24 Id., *Sztuka dowodzenia na zachodzie Europy*, Główna Księgarnia Wojskowa, Warszawa 1934.

25 On the conflict between Kukiel and Piłsudski, as well as the support that Kukiel received from Tokarz: Andrzej Zahorski, «Wacław Tokarz (1873–1937),» in Aleksander Gieysztor, Jerzy Maternicki, Henryk Samsonowicz (ed.), *Historycy warszawscy ostatnich dwóch stuleci*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1986, pp. 208–209; Piotr Stawecki, «Generał Marian Kukiel jako szef Biura Historycznego Sztabu Generalnego i jego konflikt z marszałkiem Józefem Piłsudskim w 1925 r.,» *PH*, 78, 3, 1987, pp. 493–516; Wiesław Majewski, «Kukiel a kwestia autorstwa planu bitwy warszawskiej 1920 r.,» *WPH*, 35, 1–2, 1990, pp. 41–49; Benon Miśkiewicz, *Polska historiografia wojskowa*, *cit.*, pp. 155–156, 170–171; Janusz Zuziak, *Generał Marian Kukiel*, *cit*., pp. 103–108; Marek Jabłonowski, Piotr Stawecki, «Spór z marszałkiem Józefem Piłsudskim o historię wojny 1920,» in Eid. (ed.), *Marian Kukiel. Historyk w świecie polityki*, ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2010, pp. 83–103; Piotr Biliński, *Wacław Tokarz 1873–1937. Historyk walk o niepodległość*, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2018, pp. 125–126.

ethos and only secondarily as an effort to understand the past.[26] From his perspective, freedom of research was restricted in favor of promoting Piłsudski's persona and ideas.[27] Stachiewicz's reforms marked the end of the period of rapprochement between academic history and history written from a "general staff perspective" in Poland.

The decline is evident in Laskowski's proposal to classify military history as… a part of an applied science.[28] Prior to 1926, he drew attention rather to the sociocultural conditions of the military solutions adopted by individual armies, similar to Delbrück.[29]

Kukiel began working at the Jagiellonian University (Uniwersytet Jagielloński) in Krakow in 1927. The University of Warsaw (Uniwersytet Warszawski) hired Tokarz the following year. The new places for conducting historical research enabled both scholars to continue their studies and offered hope of establishing a new specialty in historical research within an academic environment.

A dispute between the civilian scholar Józef Siemieński (1882–1941) and Laskowski revealed negative trends within the Polish military historical service under Stachiewicz's direction.[30] When the new journal *Przegląd History-*

26 In 1924, Stachiewicz presented this opinion in a memorandum addressed to the Minister of Military Affairs: Stefan Zwoliński, «Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny Akademii Obrony Narodowej 1997–2001. Działalność organizacyjna i naukowo-badawcza,» in Zbigniew Grabowski et al. (ed.), *Z dziejów służby historycznej Wojska Polskiego 1918–2002*, Comandor, Warszawa 2002, pp. 17–18. On Stachiewicz's specific approach to historiography: Piotr Stawecki, «Generał Julian Stachiewicz – organizator nauki historyczno-wojskowej,» *Teki Historyczne*, 21, 1994–1995, p. 131.

27 Benon Miśkiewicz, *Polska historiografia wojskowa*, *cit*., pp. 149, 255, 265, 293–294; Id., «Historiografia wojskowa a problemy służby historycznej Wojska Polskiego,» in Zbigniew Moszumański (ed.), *Szefowie ośrodków naukowo-badawczych wojskowej służby historycznej 1921–2002. Materiały z konferencji naukowej, Warszawa, 29 listopada 2002 r.*, Comandor, Warszawa 2003, pp. 28–31; Id., «Studia nad metodologią nauki historyczno-wojskowej,» in Karol Kościelniak, Zbigniew Pilarczyk (ed.), *Metodologia i metodyka badań historyczno-wojskowych. Studia i szkice*, Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2012, pp. 27–28; Janusz Zuziak, *Generał Marian Kukiel*, *cit*., p. 128; Jerzy Maroń, *O osobliwościach polskiej historii wojskowości*, Chronicon, Wrocław 2013, pp. 11–12.

28 [Otton Laskowski], «Historja wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 375.

29 Id., «Znaczenie ogólne i wychowawcze,» *cit*., pp. 2, 4–5.

30 Józef Siemieński, «W sprawie organizacji historii,» *cit*., pp. 137–159; Otton Laskowski, «W sprawie organizacji historii,» *cit*., pp. 281–294.

czno-Wojskowy was established in 1929 with Laskowski as editor-in-chief, it seemed to provide a new forum for exchanging ideas, including the methods of researching military history.[31] However, Stachiewicz imposed a uniform political line determining the selection of topics and their interpretation, and some authors, especially Kukiel, were excluded from contributing to the journal.[32]

In the first issue, Siemieński urged "historians in military uniforms" to avoid isolating themselves from the academic community due to a sense of omnipotence. He used Delbrück as an example to show the advantage of a civilian perspective.[33] Siemieński's methodological postulates were similar to those of the Berlin professor.[34] He criticized the strict subordination of research to the needs of the Polish Army; from his point of view, this negatively impacted the scope of the issues addressed and how they were described.[35] He also pointed out that the purpose of historical studies is to understand and explain the past, rather than to serve military educational needs. While military ideas should be based on the findings of professional scholars, the latter should remain primary. According to Siemieński, if the relationship between the objects of historical work is reversed, the quality of publications will suffer, resulting in a waste of human, financial, and organizational potential.[36]

In response, Laskowski agreed with Siemieński's diagnosis but believed that it was simply a natural state of affairs in the case of military institutions.[37] Giv-

31 See Marta Cękalska, «Początki „Przeglądu Historyczno-Wojskowego" (1929–1939),» *PHW*, 20, 4, 2019, pp. 11–43.

32 Benon Miśkiewicz, «Rola „Przeglądu Historyczno-Wojskowego" w polskiej historiografii wojskowej (1929–1938),» *SDPHW*, 2, 1998, pp. 110, 112–113. This is evident in the scandal surrounding Kukiel's invitation to collaborate with *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*. After Stachiewicz intervened personally, the invitation was withdrawn as part of a broader process to marginalize Kukiel's importance in the community of Polish military historians: Piotr Stawecki, «Generał Marian Kukiel,» *cit*., pp. 500–516; Janusz Zuziak, *Generał Marian Kukiel*, *cit*., pp. 102, 107, 127–128; Marek Jabłonowski, Piotr Stawecki, «Spór z marszałkiem,» *cit*., pp. 98–101. Laskowski sometimes tried to avoid these actions as much as possible: Michał N. Faszcza, «Narodziny „polskiej szkoły" (część 1),» *cit*., p. 233 n. 56.

33 Józef Siemieński, «W sprawie organizacji historii,» *cit*., p. 142.

34 *Ibid*., pp. 140–141.

35 *Ibid*., pp. 143–146.

36 *Ibid*., p. 140.

37 Otton Laskowski, «W sprawie organizacji historii,» *cit*., p. 285.

en his stance, Siemieński's reply was essentially no longer significant,[38] as the other side remained closed to any discussion leading to increased pluralism. The polemic between Siemieński and Laskowski was the final attempt to draw the attention of "historians in military uniforms" to the importance of Delbrück's work and the advantages of breaking the "general staff perspective" monopoly.

Laskowski could simply not be impressed by Siemieński's arguments. He was unfamiliar with Delbrück's work,[39] had received no formal historical education,[40] and, as a subordinate of Stachiewicz and his successors, could only express his personal views to a limited extent. Above all, he represented the official position of the military historical service. Moreover, engaging with the academic community would have meant acknowledging Tokarz and Kukiel. Despite his respect for the two scholars,[41] Laskowski could not do so in the political atmosphere of the time.

Thanks to the positions held by Tokarz and Kukiel at universities, new research centers alternative to the military could be created over time. The two

38 Józef Siemieński, «Replika dr. Józefa Siemieńskiego,» *PHW*, 1, 2, 1929, pp. 300–306.

39 In 1921, Laskowski openly admitted his ignorance of Delbrück's work: Otton Laskowski, rev. *Podstawowe pojęcia historji wojennej*, napisał Witold Hupert ppłk Warszawa, Księgarnia M. Arcta, 1921, str. 10, *Bellona*, 4, 3, 1921, p. 265. Even in later years, there is no trace of Laskowski reading Delbrück's publications, as evidenced by his unawareness of the influence of ancient writers on the military reforms of the Renaissance: Id., «Zadania pracy,» *cit*., p. 20; Id., «Kilka uwag na marginesie,» *cit*., pp. 230–231. It is problematic to attempt to prove the opposite claim based on the number of series he adopted within individual formations (Jerzy Maroń, «Otton Laskowski – współtwórca nowoczesnej polskiej historiografii militarnej,» *Analecta. Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki*, 30, 3, 2021, pp. 289 n. 152, 291 n. 170) because it would imply that Laskowski knew some of the detailed findings yet failed to grasp the basics. Therefore, it seems that he may have become familiar with some of Delbrück's arguments through another author, at best having been exposed to fragments of the Berlin professor's work.

40 Laskowski received his master's degree in history from the University of Warsaw in 1939, not as a result of completing his studies, but rather in recognition of his publications: Benon Miśkiewicz, *Polska historiografia wojskowa*, *cit.*, p. 201 n. 201.

41 At various times, Laskowski attended seminars led by Tokarz and Kukiel: Jerzy Maroń, «Otton Laskowski,» *cit*., p. 263 n. 1. According to Lieutenant Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski (1899–1962), Laskowski considered Kukiel the most outstanding Polish expert on military issues: Przemysław M. Żukowski, «Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski. Z mojego okienka. W Polsce przed wojną,» *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne*, 135, 2008, pp. 169–171.

historians' most noteworthy monographs were published shortly after 1926.[42] Tokarz's death in 1937 and the outbreak of World War II ultimately halted the dissemination of military history at Polish universities. Ultimately, military historiography during the interwar period failed to evolve beyond the patterns established in the nineteenth century.[43]

In the context of trends in Polish military history research, Stefan Płoski's (1899–1966) brief biography of Delbrück is now merely a curiosity. Płoski considered Delbrück to be the founder of academic military history and was opposed to the Germanization of Poles.[44] Płoski correctly observed that Delbrück was particularly interested in political and economic aspects because they directly impact the evolution of military affairs.[45]

In summary, an analysis of works by Polish authors from 1918 to 1939 reveals the lack of popularity of Delbrück's concepts. In fact, Rola-Arciszewski was the only author to extensively use Delbrück's work, albeit in a relatively narrow context. While Tokarz and Kukiel acknowledged the importance of conducting academic research on military issues, almost all of their "programmatic" articles were written during their military service. The only exceptions were two of Kukiel's papers, addressed to an academic audience.[46]

A lack of proper knowledge about the specifics of the interwar period can lead to misunderstandings nowadays. Tokarz and Kukiel, who were preparing articles for military journals intended for officers, naturally adapted the content and style to suit their audience's needs and abilities. For instance, they avoided historical-philosophical deliberations because they were irrelevant to the officers' education. The guidelines they formulated for work within the military

42 Wacław Tokarz, *Wojna polsko-rosyjska 1830 i 1831*, Wojskowy Instytut Naukowo-Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1930; Id., *Insurekcja warszawska 17 i 18 kwietnia 1794*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Lwów 1934; Marian Kukiel, *Wojna 1812 roku*, 1–3, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków 1937.

43 Perhaps Laskowski prevented the complete alienation of "historians in military uniforms" by maintaining informal contacts with Tokarz and Kukiel, as well as by collaborating with young adepts of the specialty: Jerzy Maroń, *O osobliwościach polskiej historii*, *cit*. p. 23.

44 Stefan Płoski, «Profesor Delbrück,» *PHW*, 2, 1, 1930, p. 189.

45 *Ibid*.

46 Marian Kukiel, «Miejsce historji wojskowej,» *cit.*, pp. 1–15; Id., «O podziale polskiej historji,» *cit.*, pp. 63–81.

historical service are widely recognized in Poland as universal, even though they do not and never have fit the specifics of universities. Analyzing Tokarz's and Kukiel's publications written after 1926 reveals a lack of these "practically useful" themes as the context of their professional activities changed.

Delbrück's studies were only marginally included because military history was assigned to the research and publishing institutions of the Polish Army, and military education was based on the French model (and thus French military publications). After 1926, Siemieński was the only person to propose implementing patterns associated with modern military historiography in Poland, but he encountered a wall of misunderstanding and did not have the academic standing to attempt to change the situation alone. The lack of distinction between "military historians" and "military critics" (using Delbrück's proposed division), particularly when describing conflicts fought after 1918, has blurred the line between the two forms of military analysis, especially since both were intended to serve military educational and training purposes. While fully appreciating the achievements of the first generation of Polish military historians, who played a pioneering role, it is difficult not to agree with Siemieński. As early as 1929, he noted the growing divergence between trends in European and Polish scholarly trends.[47]

7.2 Polish People's Republic (1945–1989)

From 1945 to 1989, methodological reflection—closely linked to the history of historiography—was dominated by two scholars: Stanisław Herbst (1907–1973) and Benon Miśkiewicz (1930–2008). Herbst continued the work of the "Warsaw School," which was initiated by Tokarz at the University of Warsaw.[48] Miśkiewicz was one of the co-creators of the "Poznań School," which emerged at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s at the Adam Mickiewicz University (Uni-

47 Józef Siemieński, «W sprawie organizacji historii,» *cit*., pp. 139, 142.

48 See Wiesław Majewski, «Historia wojskowa w Instytucie Historycznym Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego,» *PH*, 71, 4, 1980, pp. 673–703; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – badacz dziejów wojskowych,» in *Studia z dziejów historiografii wojskowej*, 2, Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny, Warszawa 1989, pp. 295–298; Jerzy Maroń, «Pogmatwana genealogia. O warszawskiej szkole historyczno-wojskowej słów kilka,» *Rocznik Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej*, 1, 2013, pp. 253–265.

wersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza).[49] Throughout their academic careers, both scholars collaborated with institutions of the Polish People's Army. Their careers reflect a fundamental change introduced in Poland after 1945. Despite the strong institutional position of the Military Historical Institute (Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny), established in 1959 and subordinated to the Ministry of National Defense, the discourse began to be shaped by civilian historians, in accordance with Delbrück's postulate. Herbst and Miśkiewicz were separated by generational differences as well as by their attitudes toward the officially dominant Marxist paradigm and the work of the "father of military history."

Herbst wrote his doctoral thesis in 1931 under the supervision of Oskar Halecki (1891–1973), but he attended Tokarz's seminars.[50] Two factors primarily influenced Herbst's historical views: his unfulfilled youthful dream of entering professional military service[51] and the development of his craft as a historian through contact with Tokarz, Laskowski, and, to a lesser extent, Kukiel.[52] Thus, Herbst's research efforts to understand military history focused on Poland and largely continued the patterns established during the interwar period.

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49 See Benon Miśkiewicz, «Problematyka badawcza dziejów wojskowości polskiej w pracach Zakładu Historii Wojskowości UAM,» *SDPHW*, 1, 1975, pp. 7–14; Id., «Powstanie i działalność poznańskiego Zakładu Historii Wojskowej,» *SDPHW*, 2, 1998, pp. 115–125.

50 Stanisław Herbst, «Jak zostałem historykiem,» in Id., *Potrzeba historii czyli o polskim stylu życia. Wybór pism*, 2, ed. Andrzej Zahorski et al., Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, pp. 21–22. Herbst was directly mentioned by Tokarz among his students: Wacław Tokarz, *Insurekcja warszawska*, *cit.*, p. 14.

51 Stanisław Herbst, «Jak zostałem historykiem,» *cit*., p. 21.

52 Wiesław Majewski, «Stanisław Herbst – historyk wojskowy,» *PH*, 65, 1, 1974, p. 6; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – historyk sztuki wojennej, która też jest sztuką,» in Stanisław Herbst, *Potrzeba historii czyli o polskim stylu życia. Wybór pism*, 2, ed. Andrzej Zahorski et al., Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, pp. 8–10; Id., «Historia wojskowa w Instytucie Historycznym,» *cit.*, pp. 675–676; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – badacz,» *cit*., pp. 292, 294–295; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – historyk, nonkonformista,» in Józef Kazimierski (ed.), *Stanisław Herbst. Historyk i regionalista. 12 lipca 1907–24 czerwca 1973*, Mazowiecki Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Stanisława Herbsta, Warszawa 1996, pp. 25, 27; Id., «Metodyka historyczno-wojskowa w pracach Stanisława Herbsta. Wybrane problemy,» in Konrad Bobiatyński, Przemysław Gawron, Mirosław Nagielski (ed.), *Wojsko, wojskowość, miasta. Studia poświęcone Prof. Stanisławowi Herbstowi w stulecie urodzin*, Infort Editions, Zabrze 2009, pp. 61, 65; Andrzej Zahorski, «Stanisław Herbst (1907–1973),» in Aleksander Gieysztor, Jerzy Maternicki, Henryk Samsonowicz (ed.), *Historycy warszawscy ostatnich dwóch stuleci*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1986, pp. 459–461.

Stanisław Herbst (1907–1973).
(Andrzej Wyczański, «Stanisław Herbst 1907–1973. O twórczości naukowej,» in Waldemar Baraniewski, Wojciech Tygielski, Andrzej K. Wróblewski (ed.), *Monumenta Universitatis Varsoviensis 1816–2016. Portrety uczonych. Profesorowie Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego po 1945. A–K*, Warszawa 2016, p. 390)

In a 1961 article, Herbst presented his views on the study of military affairs.[53] He then summarized his ideas in two encyclopedia entries published in 1967.[54] His work demonstrates the great influence of Tokarz, Kukiel, and Delbrück. Herbst described them as being essential to have addressed military issues academically.[55] According to Herbst, prominent Western historians of subsequent years, such as Charles Oman and Ferdinand Lot, also based their work on Delbrück's findings.[56] Thus, Herbst implied that assimilating Delbrück's postulates was one of the hallmarks of a high academic quality present in the publications of his mentors, either explicitly (Tokarz) or declaratively (Kukiel).

Herbst noted Delbrück's combination of military experience and formal academic education, which enabled him to consider both perspectives.[57] He paraphrased an observation made by a Berlin professor who lamented the military amateurism of civilian authors and the lack of historical education among members of the officer corps.[58] Herbst had likely read Delbrück's work, as evidenced by his citation of the famous correspondence between Delbrück and General Sigismund von Schlichting.[59] His familiarity with the original (German) edition distinguishes Herbst from many other authors of both the interwar and the postwar periods.

Herbst broadly recognized the "political framework" mentioned in the title

53 Reprint: Stanisław Herbst, «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje, metodyka, metodologia,» in Id., *Potrzeba historii czyli o polskim stylu życia. Wybór pism*, 2, ed. Andrzej Zahorski et al., Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, pp. 23–36.

54 Id., «Historia wojskowa,» in Marian Odlewany et al. (ed.), *Mała encyklopedia wojskowa*, 1, *A–J*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1967, p. 511; Id., «Historiografia wojskowa,» in Marian Odlewany et al. (ed.), *Mała encyklopedia wojskowa*, 1, *A–J*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1967, pp. 511–512. Although the authorship of both entries was not indicated, the presumption that they were prepared by Herbst was confirmed orally by him: Wiesław Majewski, «Historia wojskowa w Instytucie Historycznym,» *cit.*, p. 698; Id., «Metodyka historyczno-wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 54 n. 4.

55 Stanisław Herbst, «Przedmowa,» in Wacław Tokarz, *Rozprawy i szkice*, 2, *Militaria*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1959, p. 7; Id., «Historiografia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 512; Id., «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje,» *cit*., p. 27.

56 *Ibid*., p. 28.

57 *Ibid*., p. 27.

58 *Ibid*., p. 26.

59 *Ibid*., p. 27. Herbst also noted Delbrück's conflict with the Prussian military establishment: Id., «Przedmowa,» *cit*., p. 7.

of Delbrück's main work, including the social context, which is further confirmation of his familiarity with *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*.[60] Throughout his time at the University of Warsaw, Herbst maintained Delbrück's perspective, though this stemmed more from his individual inclinations and Tokarz's influence than from Delbrück's writings. Among Polish military historians, Tokarz was considered the one who most closely adhered to Delbrück's research practices.[61] Both were strongly influenced by Leopold von Ranke.[62]

Another noticeable similarity was the combination of academic and military perspectives, which, in Tokarz's case, secured him a prominent place in the pantheon of the most prominent Polish historians.[63] These coincidences may be puzzling, raising questions about the reasons for Herbst's admiration of Delbrück. Presumably it simply stemmed from recognition of the German forerunner's work, as surviving memoirs do not confirm the assumption about Tokarz's special efforts to popularize German historiography. The two historians Herbst emphasized most tended to highlight the socio-political context in a non-Marxist way, which is hard to overlook.

Tokarz's social sensitivity, along with his critical attitude toward Piłsudski's environment after 1926, determined the possibility of publishing his collected works in 1959, thanks to Herbst's efforts.[64] Tokarz's views were acceptable to the authorities under the new political conditions, even during the Stalinist period (1949–1956).[65]

For Herbst, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* remains the most important synthet-

60 Id., «[Historia wojskowa a działalność praktyczna],» in Id., *Potrzeba historii czyli o polskim stylu życia. Wybór pism*, 2, ed. Andrzej Zahorski et al., Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, p. 42. More generally: Id., «Przedmowa,» *cit*., p. 7; Id., «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje,» *cit*., p. 27.

61 Id., «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje,» *cit*., pp. 30–32; Id., «O śp. Wacławie Tokarzu,» in Id., *Potrzeba historii czyli o polskim stylu życia. Wybór pism*, 2, ed. Andrzej Zahorski et al., Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, p. 51.

62 Id., «Przedmowa,» *cit*., p. 11.

63 Id., «O śp. Wacławie Tokarzu,» *cit*., p. 51.

64 Wacław Tokarz, *Rozprawy i szkice*, 1–2, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1959.

65 «Aktualne problemy i zadania polskiej nauki historyczno-wojskowej,» *Studia i Materiały do Historii Sztuki Wojennej*, 1, 1954, pp. 3–15.

ic work,[66] but he sided with the Polish interwar tradition on the fundamental issue. Delbrück firmly rejected the subservient role of military history to the needs of military institutions. Therefore, Herbst was much closer to the views held by Tokarz, Kukiel, and Laskowski.[67] While Herbst acknowledged the practical value of military history, he also emphasized the necessity of maintaining high academic standards to achieve an accurate understanding of the past and minimize the risk of adopting erroneous solutions resulting from historiographical distortions and oversimplifications.[68]

Herbst faced the challenge of potential accusations of promoting "imperialist" achievements when he offered a positive assessment of Delbrück's work. Delbrück's political views, especially his position on the Polish question, were largely unknown in Poland. The solution was to recall Franz Mehring' positive opinion of the "father of military history."[69] Such measures were necessary not only because of the postwar atmosphere and Herbst's work at the Feliks Dzierżyński Military Political Academy (Wojskowa Akademia Polityczna im. Feliksa Dzierżyńskiego) in Warsaw from 1957 to 1968 but also because of his skepticism toward Marxist ideology. The new situation forced Herbst to find a middle ground between the state's official political line and his personal beliefs.[70] By citing the works of Delbrück and Tokarz, Herbst promoted the ideas of historians with strong reputations before the war who were hardly tolerated by the new regime.[71]

66 Stanisław Herbst, «Historiografia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 512.

67 Id., «Przedmowa,» *cit*., pp. 7–8; Id., «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje,» *cit*., pp. 27–28.

68 Id., «Historia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 511; Id., «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje,» *cit*., p. 36; Id., «[Historia wojskowa a działalność praktyczna],» *cit*., pp. 38–40, 42.

69 Id., «Historiografia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 512; Id., «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje» *cit*., p. 28.

70 Wiesław Majewski, «Stanisław Herbst – historyk, nonkonformista,» *cit*., pp. 34–36; Tadeusz Rawski, «Seminarium Stanisława Herbsta skansenem wymiany wolnej myśli,» in Józef Kazimierski (ed.), *Stanisław Herbst. Historyk i regionalista. 12 lipca 1907–24 czerwca 1973*, Mazowiecki Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Stanisława Herbsta, Warszawa 1996, pp. 125–126. The problems Herbst had to grapple with are evidenced by the clumsy yet necessary references to Marxism in his publications, along with his simultaneous criticism of the approach to military history proposed by Soviet scholars: Stanisław Herbst, «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje,» *cit*., pp. 23–24, 28–29. Herbst's publicly manifested religiosity was an additional complication: Wiesław Majewski, «Stanisław Herbst – historyk wojskowy,» *cit*., p. 6.

71 In 1968, Herbst was forced to leave the Military Political Academy and limit his teaching activities to the University of Warsaw due to the introduction of a ban on dual tenure, which was

As Miśkiewicz noted, even in the 1960s, the Marxist approach of some Polish authors remained purely declarative, as it was reflected in the topics they chose and how they described them (e.g., the periodization they adopted).[72] Miśkiewicz's assessment was undoubtedly influenced by Herbst's attitudes and those of some of his students.

Evident in his extensive work in social and cultural history,[73] Herbst's broad research interests enabled him to develop and implement theoretical postulates. His polyhistorism required constant engagement with diverse fields of knowledge. Therefore, it is no wonder that he encouraged young history students to choose their readings as broadly as possible.[74] As a result, Herbst was the Polish scholar who most closely followed Delbrück's model of historiography.

Herbst paid particular attention to field studies and visiting fortifications, which was intended to provide a better understanding of the subject by offering a firsthand experience of the space and architectural conditions. His attitude was evident in the historical-military trips he organized for his seminar students.[75] Although Herbst primarily emulated Laskowski, field studies fell within

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the result of a changing political atmosphere and a renewed increase in repression against the academic community in the years 1968–1970. On the changes taking place in higher education at that time: Tadeusz P. Rutkowski, *Nauki historyczne w Polsce 1944–1970. Zagadnienia polityczne i organizacyjne*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2007, pp. 468–505; Rafał Stobiecki, *Historiografia PRL. Ani dobra, ani mądra, ani piękna… ale skomplikowana*, TRIO, Warszawa 2007, pp. 158–160; Id., *Historiografia PRL. Zamiast podręcznika*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2020, pp. 108–110. On the change in the concept of military education: Dariusz S. Kozerawski, *Wyższe szkolnictwo wojskowe*, *cit*., p. 196; Roman Tomaszewski, *Między przełomami. Polskie szkolnictwo wojskowe 1957–1968*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2022, pp. 336–340.

72 Benon Miśkiewicz, *Polska historiografia wojskowa*, *cit.*, p. 309; Id., «Studia nad metodologią,» *cit*., p. 31.

73 Despite his studies on various aspects of history, Herbst saw himself primarily as a military historian: Andrzej Zahorski, «Stanisław Herbst,» *cit*., p. 469.

74 Stanisław Herbst, «Jak zostałem historykiem,» *cit*., p. 22.

75 Wiesław Majewski, «Stanisław Herbst – historyk wojskowy,» *cit*., p. 14; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – historyk sztuki wojennej,» *cit*., pp. 13–14; Id., «Historia wojskowa w Instytucie Historycznym,» *cit*., pp. 692–693; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – historyk, nonkonformista,» *cit*., p. 28; Id., «Metodyka historyczno-wojskowa,» *cit*., pp. 60–61, 70–73; Andrzej Zahorski, «Stanisław Herbst,» *cit*., p. 470; Mirosław Nagielski, «Stanisław Herbst jako dydaktyk i wychowawca wielu pokoleń historyków wojskowości,» in Konrad Bobiatyński, Przemysław Gawron, Mirosław Nagielski (ed.), *Wojsko, wojskowość, miasta. Studia poświęcone Prof. Stanisławowi Herbstowi w stulecie urodzin*, Infort Editions, Zabrze 2009, p. 39.

the framework of *Sachkritik*. Before World War II, Laskowski held informal seminars to prepare aspiring military historians for publication in *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*.[76]

Herbst's contributions are difficult to overestimate, especially given his commitment to shaping the historical awareness of the younger generation and popularizing content he deems essential.[77] Through the military history seminars he conducted and the entries he wrote for *Mała encyklopedia wojskowa*, he educated numerous scholars and disseminated information contradicting General Yevgeny (Evgeny) Razin's oversimplified claims. Preserving the memory of pre-war historians' achievements, including Delbrück's, was part of his mission.[78]

Colonel Janusz Sikorski (1927–2011), one of Herbst's students,[79] also contributed significantly to Polish military historiography. He is still recognized today as the author of the best Polish synthesis of European warfare until the mid-nineteenth century. The book had two editions in the 1970s.[80] In the introduction Sikorski thanks Herbst for reading and commenting on the manuscript.[81] Sikorski's adoption of his mentor's perspective on military history research is

76 Wiesław Majewski, «Stanisław Herbst – historyk wojskowy,» *cit*., p. 6; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – historyk sztuki wojennej,» *cit*., pp. 9–10; Id., «Stanisław Herbst – badacz,» *cit*., p. 295; Andrzej Zahorski, «Życie i twórczość Stanisława Herbsta,» in Stanisław Herbst, *Potrzeba historii czyli o polskim stylu życia. Wybór pism*, 1, ed. Andrzej Zahorski et al., Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, p. 16; Benon Miśkiewicz, *Polska historiografia wojskowa*, *cit.*, p. 363; Jerzy Maroń, *O osobliwościach polskiej historii*, *cit*., p. 23.

77 See Wiesław Majewski, «Stanisław Herbst – historyk, nonkonformista,» *cit*., p. 26.

78 Therefore, the claim of a complete break in continuity with the thought of the interwar period (Jerzy Maroń, *O osobliwościach polskiej historii*, *cit*., pp. 24–25) seems too extreme. Even if its impact has significantly weakened, thanks to Herbst's efforts, at least some elements have been preserved, as evidenced by the writings of both himself and his students, some of whom are mentioned later in this chapter.

79 Mirosław Nagielski, «Stanisław Herbst jako dydaktyk,» *cit*., p. 38; Michał Kozłowski, «Historycy wojskowości – uczniowie Stanisława Herbsta,» *PHW*, 20, 4, 2019, pp. 116, 123.

80 In 1972 and 1975. Cited edition: Janusz Sikorski, *Zarys historii wojskowości powszechnej do końca wieku XIX*, wyd. 2, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1975. Sikorski's work is an expansion of the textbooks he prepared between 1957 and 1961 for students of the Military Political Academy. It is striking that, despite the passage of almost 50 years since its second edition, the Polish military historian community has not undertaken such a large-scale project.

81 *Ibid*., p. 6.

not surprising in light of their long-term collaboration.

Sikorski's scholarly path was reflected in his deep respect for Delbrück's seminal work. Regarding antiquity, it is described as "fundamental,"[82] and regarding the Middle Ages and the early modern period, it is characterized as "one of the most important."[83] His admiration for the German pioneer went hand in hand with a critical assessment of Razin's work, which was heavily promoted by political authorities. Sikorski accused Razin of providing a biased and unfair evaluation of Western historians' achievements, among other things.[84] Since the remark was in the section on antiquity, it could only have been about Delbrück.[85]

Sikorski erred in attributing the authorship of the fifth volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* to Delbrück,[86] as it was actually the work of Emil Daniels.[87]

In terms of accent placement, Sikorski's work was somewhat more conservative. He emphasized the characteristics of the changes taking place in military organization, weaponry, and tactics, only briefly addressing the socio-political background. Delbrück's influence is most evident in the sections dedicated to antiquity and the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Additionally, Sikorski redefined the subject of research, advocating for the traditional Polish term "military history" rather than the "art of war," a term used by Delbrück (*Kriegskunst*) and Marxist authors influenced by Razin (военное искусство).[88] In an article published in 1956, Sikorski reiterated his earlier theses and presented the first open polemic against using Soviet terminology in Polish historiography.[89] His opinions were closely linked to the resurgence of

82 *Ibid*., p. 19.

83 *Ibid*., pp. 125, 255. Sikorski also used Delbrück's work to outline the European context of Polish military thought: Id., *Polskie piśmiennictwo wojskowe od XV do XX wieku*, Bellona, Warszawa 1991.

84 Id., *Zarys historii wojskowości*, *cit*., p. 20.

85 Ewgienij Razin, *Historia sztuki wojennej*, 1, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1958, pp. 5, 75–76.

86 Janusz Sikorski, *Zarys historii wojskowości*, *cit*., pp. 434, 613.

87 Emil Daniels, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 5, *Die Neuzeit (Fortsetzung)*, Stilke, Berlin 1928.

88 Janusz Sikorski, *Zarys historii wojskowości*, *cit*., pp. 7–12. In the theoretical part, Sikorski referred primarily to the Marxist definition of the art of war.

89 Id., «O przedmiocie nauki wojskowej,» *Myśl Wojskowa*, 2, 8, 1956, pp. 62–74. Sikorski disapproved of the aforementioned terminology, which had been presented as binding only two

methodological pluralism in 1956, based on political changes in Poland,[90] which led to the increased "scholarization" of military academies through the hiring of civilian lecturers.[91] By 1975, Sikorski had clearly declared his support for "military history." Herbst consistently held the same view.[92]

Although there were some critical voices, Sikorski's synthesis was well-received by the military history community. For example, Miśkiewicz accused the author of using a non-Marxist periodization and emphasized that military phenomena cannot be separated from the "division of basic socio-economic formations."[93] In turn, Colonel Leonard Ratajczyk (1928–2002) criticized Sikorski for omitting Delbrück's work from the section on the evolution of military thought, only including him in the characterization of the state of research.[94] Interestingly, Ratajczyk himself never consulted the publications of the Berlin professor when writing his synthesis of military history.[95]

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years earlier: «Aktualne problemy i zadania,» *cit*., pp. 3–4. Its basis was not the findings of military researchers but rather, the arguments of classic Marxists. In terms of terminology, Sikorski's position was soon supported by Miśkiewicz: Benon Miśkiewicz, «O przedmiocie nauki historyczno-wojskowej,» *Myśl Wojskowa*, 4, 5, 1958, pp. 82–90.

90 Rafał Stobiecki, *Historia pod nadzorem. Spory o nowy model historii w Polsce (II połowa lat czterdziestych – początek lat pięćdziesiątych)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 1993, pp. 131–136; Id., *Historiografia PRL*, *cit*., pp. 128–130, 140–141, 172–180; Id., *Historiografia PRL. Zamiast podręcznika*, *cit*., pp. 77–90; Tadeusz P. Rutkowski, *Nauki historyczne w Polsce*, *cit*., pp. 272–316; Zbigniew Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce 1944–1970*, Neriton, Warszawa 2010, pp. 201–244; Jerzy Maroń, *O osobliwościach polskiej historii*, *cit*., pp. 24–25.

91 Dariusz S. Kozerawski, *Wyższe szkolnictwo wojskowe*, *cit*., pp. 195–196, 295–296; Roman Tomaszewski, *Między przełomami*, *cit*., pp. 72–103, 159–160.

92 Stanisław Herbst, «Historia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 511; Id., «Historia wojskowa: treść, dzieje,» *cit*., pp. 23–24.

93 Benon Miśkiewicz, «O najnowszym zarysie historii powszechnej wojskowości,» *Roczniki Historyczne*, 40, 1974, pp. 170–173. Earlier, Miśkiewicz had already made the same critical remark, referring to Sikorski's theses expressed in his 1956 article: Id., «O przedmiocie nauki historyczno-wojskowej,» *cit*., p. 89. Another criticism of Delbrück's research perspective, which clashes with the Marxist paradigm: Zdzisław Majewski, «Zagadnienia periodyzacji dziejów wojennych,» in Czesław Łuczak (ed.), *Materiały z konferencji naukowej historyków wojskowych w Poznaniu poświęconej problematyce metodologicznej w rozwoju polskiej historiografii wojskowej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1966, p. 83.

94 Leonard Ratajczyk, «Historia wojskowości w ujęciu Janusza Sikorskiego,» *SMHW*, 18, 2, 1972, p. 288.

95 Id., *Historia wojskowości*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1980.

Later, Sikorski wrote a monograph on the Battle of Cannae in a "classically Delbrückian" style, listing the Berlin professor as the foremost expert on the subject.[96] However, Sikorski's book must be critically assessed, as he was clearly influenced by Harold Lamb's (1892–1962) fictionalized biography of Hannibal Barca (247–183 BCE).[97] Sikorski prioritized Lamb's sometimes rather free descriptions over the content of source materials and the findings of classical German historiography. Given that Sikorski specialized in Polish military history for most of his academic career, his decision to write about Cannae can be seen as a conscious choice motivated by a desire to build upon Delbrück's work.

Sikorski's interests and the structure of his synthesis place him as one of the primary Polish proponents of Delbrück's ideas, alongside Herbst. Notably, Sikorski was the only Polish historian to undertake the task of writing a book in the spirit of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*. Although it was not as innovative as the original and lacked Delbrück's characteristic polemical themes, it served as a primary source of knowledge about universal military history for subsequent generations.[98]

A few years later, Ratajczyk, who was also a professional officer and a student of Stefan Kieniewicz (1907–1992),[99] published another synthesis of military history.[100] Its content represents a clear regression compared to Sikorski's work, in terms of both substance and quality. Ratajczyk based his knowledge of ancient military history on the publications of Frederick Engels (1820–1895) and Razin. He was unfamiliar with the Western classics of historiography. Delbrück's work is not even listed in the bibliography. Ratajczyk repeated Sikorski's mistake regarding the authorship of the fifth volume of *Geschichte der*

96 Janusz Sikorski, *Kanny 216 p.n.e.*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1984, p. 9.

97 Harold Lamb, *Hannibal: One man against Rome*, Hale, London 1959.

98 A similar method of constructing arguments was previously adopted in the two-volume synthesis of Polish military history published under Sikorski's editorship: Janusz Sikorski (ed.), *Zarys dziejów wojskowości polskiej do roku 1864*, 1–2, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1965–1966.

99 Leonard Ratajczyk, *Historia wojskowości*, *cit*.

100 Krzysztof Groniowski, «Seminarium Stefana Kieniewicza,» *PH*, 91, 3, 2000, pp. 412, 421; Michał Kozłowski, «Historycy wojskowości,» *cit*., pp. 133, 148; Stefan Kieniewicz, *Pamiętniki*, ed. Jan Kieniewicz, Znak, Kraków 2021, p. 644.

Kriegskunst.[101] Interestingly, Delbrück's name appears only once, in the context of Mehring's positive opinion of his books.[102] Ratajczyk affirmed only the Marxist methodology of historical research and presented it very cautiously.[103]

In contrast, Wiesław Majewski (1931–2021) strongly emphasized the importance of Delbrück's studies. Majewski considered Delbrück the "father of academic military history" because he combined modern historical research methodology with the centuries-old tradition of military writing.[104] Majewski was one of Herbst's students,[105] which likely influenced his historiographical views. Like his mentor, Majewski believed in the practical value of military history[106] and the usefulness of field studies, which were developed through historical-military travel, among other things.[107]

After Herbst's death in 1973, Miśkiewicz became the most prominent figure in the field of military history research theory. Unlike Herbst, Miśkiewicz overlooked the achievements of the classics of Western historiography. Instead, he offered a distinctive blend of Marxist ideas and a viewpoint stemming from the interwar period. Furthermore, he showed no interest in current discourses taking place outside of Poland, as reflected in his subsequent methodological publications. This culminated in the 2001 Polish handbook, the only one to date, introducing historical-military research. Five years later, Miśkiewicz's book was

101 Leonard Ratajczyk, *Historia wojskowości*, *cit*., p. 165.

102 *Ibid.*, pp. 165–166.

103 *Ibid.*, pp. 8–10, 13–14.

104 Wiesław Majewski, «Stanisław Herbst – badacz,» *cit*., p. 302; Id., «Metodyka historyczno-wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 54.

105 Id., «Stanisław Herbst – historyk wojskowy,» *cit*., p. 17; Id., «Historia wojskowa w Instytucie Historycznym,» *cit*., pp. 697–698; Mirosław Nagielski, «Stanisław Herbst jako dydaktyk,» *cit*., p. 38; Michał Kozłowski, «Historycy wojskowości,» *cit.*, pp. 115, 126.

106 Wiesław Majewski, «Historia wojskowa w Instytucie Historycznym,» *cit*., p. 677; Id., «Praktyczna użyteczność historii wojskowej,» in Bogusław Polak (ed.), *IV Ogólnopolskie Forum Historyków Wojskowych, Koszalin, 16 XII 1998 r.*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Koszalińskiej, Koszalin 1999, pp. 21–26; Id., «Jaka historia wojskowa,» *cit*., pp. 48–53.

107 Id., «Stanisław Herbst – historyk wojskowy,» *cit*., p. 14; Id., «Z problematyki warsztatowej,» in Benon Miśkiewicz (ed.), *Rola historii wojskowej w kształtowaniu patriotycznej świadomości społeczeństwa. Referaty i dyskusja (Pamiętnik XII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Katowicach, 17–20 września 1979 roku. Sympozjum IX)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1980, pp. 166–170; Id., «Jaka historia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 53; Id., «Metodyka historyczno-wojskowa,» *cit*., pp. 60–61, 70–73.

reissued with minor changes.[108]

Miśkiewicz supported the correctness of the term "military history" as more accurate for military issues than "military art."[109] He never referenced Delbrück's work in his discussion, ignoring its significance in shaping the specialty's identity.

For Miśkiewicz, it was a personal choice, but it quickly became the predominant approach to methodological issues in most Polish research centers. As a consequence, the findings of the "*Annales* School," the cultural turn, and the "new military history"—despite their Marxist connections—did not resonate widely among military historians. Instead, authors from the interwar period were analyzed without acknowledging that their work was not pioneering in a methodological sense against the backdrop of changes in Western historiography at the turn of the twentieth century. Their publications were largely based on nineteenth-century analyses created for military institutions (Laskowski, Porwit, and Stachiewicz) rather than academic literature. When discussing the evolution of Polish military historiography, Miśkiewicz also did not usually address its relationship to Western intellectual currents.[110] His attitude promoted the belief in the utilitarian function of military history and the necessity of linking academic studies with the research and publishing institutions of the Polish

108 Benon Miśkiewicz, *Wprowadzenie do badań*, *cit.*; Id., *Badania historycznowojskowe*, *cit.*

109 He expressed his view already in 1958: Id., «O przedmiocie nauki historyczno-wojskowej,» *cit*.

110 Id., «Próba charakterystyki rozwoju badań historycznowojskowych w Polsce,» in Czesław Łuczak (ed.), *Materiały z konferencji naukowej historyków wojskowych w Poznaniu poświęconej problematyce metodologicznej w rozwoju polskiej historiografii wojskowej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1966, pp. 5–41; Id., «Z założeń metodologicznych studiów nad dziejami polskiej historiografii wojskowej,» *SDPHW*, 1, 1975, pp. 15–34; Id., *Polska historiografia wojskowa*, *cit*.; Id., «Rola „Przeglądu Historyczno-Wojskowego",» *cit*.; Id., «Studia historycznowojskowe na łamach „Bellony" w latach 1918–1939,» *SDPHW*, 3, 1999, pp. 89–127; Id., «Historiografia wojskowa a problemy,» *cit*. Defining the history of military historiography as one of the main areas of research requiring implementation: Id., *Program rozwoju nauki historyczno-wojskowej w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1976, p. 13. The same approach can be seen in review articles about the development of historical military research in the Polish People's Republic: Marian Krwawicz, «Rozwój badań nad historią wojskową w Polsce Ludowej,» *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*, 22, 4, 1977, pp. 745–770; Tadeusz M. Nowak, «Z dziejów organizacji badań nad historią wojskową w Polsce Ludowej,» *SMHW*, 30, 1988, pp. 19–41.

People's Army.[111]

Some historians raised doubts similar to those expressed by Delbrück several decades earlier. Janusz Pajewski (1907–2003), for example, disagreed with the perception of military history as merely educational content for military academies. In his argument, the evolution of culture (including material culture) requires considering the historical context rather than assuming the universality of solutions.[112] Karol Olejnik (1938–) expanded on Pajewski's idea, arguing that understanding military history requires drawing on the achievements of experts from other fields and countries because military affairs are not an isolated phenomenon.[113] Much earlier, Herbst had already started from a similar premise, polemically expressing it against Laskowski's 1935 concept of the origin of early modern Polish warfare.[114]

In a 1967 letter to Miśkiewicz, Andrzej F. Grabski (1934–2000) rejected the idea of the advantage of military experience in the study of military history. He

111 Benon Miśkiewicz, *O metodyce badań historyczno-wojskowych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1961, pp. 32–35; Id., *Program rozwoju nauki*, *cit*., pp. 49–50; Id., «Polska historiografia wojskowa. Merytoryczne i metodologiczne problemy badawcze,» in Id. (ed.), *Rola historii wojskowej w kształtowaniu patriotycznej świadomości społeczeństwa. Referaty i dyskusja (Pamiętnik XII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Katowicach, 17–20 września 1979 roku. Sympozjum IX)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań, 1980, pp. 60–62, 65, 67–73; Id., *Wprowadzenie do badań*, *cit*., pp. 159–169; Id., *Badania historycznowojskowe*, *cit*., pp. 164–172.

112 Janusz Pajewski, «Uwagi o ocenie polskiej historiografii wojskowej,» in Czesław Łuczak (ed.), *Materiały z konferencji naukowej historyków wojskowych w Poznaniu poświęconej problematyce metodologicznej w rozwoju polskiej historiografii wojskowej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1966, pp. 90–91.

113 Karol Olejnik, «Rola wychowawcza historii wojskowej,» in Benon Miśkiewicz (ed.), *Rola historii wojskowej w kształtowaniu patriotycznej świadomości społeczeństwa. Referaty i dyskusja (Pamiętnik XII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Katowicach, 17–20 września 1979 roku. Sympozjum IX)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 1980, p. 112. Miśkiewicz took a similar position but also stated that universal military history should not be given too much importance: Benon Miśkiewicz, «Polska historiografia wojskowa,» *cit*., pp. 73–74.

114 Otton Laskowski, «Odrębność staropolskiej sztuki wojennej,» in *Pamiętnik VI Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Wilnie, 17–20 września 1935 r.*, 1, *Referaty*, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, Lwów 1935, pp. 375–387. Herbst's voice in the discussion on the paper: Stanisław Herbst, «[Wokół genezy staropolskiej sztuki wojennej],» in Id., *Potrzeba historii czyli o polskim stylu życia. Wybór pism*, 2, ed. Andrzej Zahorski et al., Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, p. 201 (reprint).

asked rhetorically whether a researcher of mass movements within the framework of social history should be legitimized by participating in a revolution. Grabski viewed the widespread adoption of the interwar mindset as an indication of the methodological shortcomings of the Polish military history research community. He also expressed his belief in the cognitive function of historical research without searching for supposedly universal patterns applicable on the battlefield.[115] Miśkiewicz recognized Grabski's point of view as partially justified, yet he did not change his position.[116]

Grabski highly valued Delbrück's *magnum opus*, as evidenced by his 1959 study of early feudal Polish military history.[117] However, the German classic did not significantly influence its content.

Years after Grabski and Miśkiewicz exchanged letters, Majewski tried to answer the question of whether professional soldiers have an advantage over civilian scholars in any area of research. In his opinion, this is only possible with regard to contemporary conflicts.[118]

General Stanisław Okęcki (1908–1991) was the longtime head of various research and publishing institutions of the Polish People's Army, although he was not formally a historian. Over time, he began to lean toward the view of the excessive complexity of military issues, which require not just one researcher for a given problem but an entire team representing different fields. He argued that this was due to the impossibility of constructing an in-depth historical description without considering social science or economic aspects.[119]

Despite the aforementioned polemical voices largely agreeing with Siemieński's 1929 viewpoint, patterns inherited from the interwar period still dominated. The generally accepted method of studying military history was to focus on national history while disregarding the international context. It also included

115 Benon Miśkiewicz, «Profesor Andrzej Feliks Grabski o metodologii historii wojskowej,» *SDPHW*, 11, 2009, pp. 24–25.

116 *Ibid*., p. 25.

117 Andrzej F. Grabski, *Polska sztuka wojenna w okresie wczesnofeudalnym*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1959, p. 10.

118 Wiesław Majewski, «Jaka historia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 59.

119 Stanisław Okęcki, «Kilka uwag o potrzebie badań interdyscyplinarnych,» *WPH*, 3, 1985, pp. 203–212.

the belief in the practical application of military history and the special research predispositions of individuals with military experience. It disregarded the discourse conducted in the West, which was only to a certain extent dictated by the imposition of Marxist ideology.[120]

As a consequence, Delbrück and his successors became absent from Polish reflection over time. Despite the large number of domestic publications dedicated to military history, the first monograph addressing a fundamental problem in postwar historiography was not published until 2011. Jerzy Maroń (1957–) wrote a study on the concept of the "military revolution."[121] It is difficult to imagine a clearer example of the negative consequences of closing oneself off to external influences.

Paradoxically, Polish military historians did not contribute greatly to the popularization of knowledge about the work of the "father of military history." Instead, political ideas researcher Jerzy Krasuski (1930–2009) devoted a separate monograph to Delbrück's political activities, which are sometimes inseparable from his views on the nature of academic work.[122]

Thus, military historians seeking to understand the circumstances surrounding the full academization of their field may be able to find the answers they seek without engaging directly with Delbrück's work. An analysis of the foot-

120 Herbst's and Sikorski's works demonstrate that there was neither a formal nor an informal ban on citing the publications of established Western historians. The obstacle was of a different kind. One had to be familiar with the historians' publications, which posed a real problem. It was easier to hide behind the "distinctiveness of Polish military tradition" or different ideological assumptions instead. Kukiel's status was much more problematic. As an émigré historian in the 1940s and 1950s, he was often treated with open hostility. The culmination was a lampoon about him published in 1954: «Aktualne problemy i zadania,» *cit*., pp. 9–10. However, in the following decade, his concepts—like Laskowski's—were sometimes invoked in a neutral or positive light. E.g., Benon Miśkiewicz, *O metodyce badań*, *cit*., pp. 16, 25–27, 32; Id., «Próba charakterystyki rozwoju,» *cit*., pp. 11–14; Janusz Pajewski, «Uwagi o ocenie,» *cit*., p. 89. For this reason, the existing image of Kukiel in Polish historiography after 1945 (see Tomasz Siewierski, «Refleksje nad recepcją twórczości Mariana Kukiela w historiografii krajowej po 1945 r.,» in Tomasz Siewierski, Zbigniew Zielonka (ed.), *Historia – wojsko – polityka. Marian Kukiel (1885–1973) i jego dzieło*, Wojskowe Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, Warszawa 2019, pp. 511–522) requires serious modification.

121 Jerzy Maroń, *Wokół teorii rewolucji militarnej. Wybrane problemy*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2011.

122 Jerzy Krasuski, *Spór o orientację imperializmu niemieckiego w dobie wilhelmińskiej. Poglądy polityczne Hansa Delbrücka*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 1961.

notes and bibliographies in their publications reveals their failure to take advantage of this opportunity. Therefore, we are dealing with a phenomenon of historians specializing in fields other than military history who close themselves off to the work of the Berlin professor, perhaps due to a lack of interest in his writings—the latter of which seems closer to the truth. Such an attitude is equivalent to a lack of reflection on one's own research identity, which ultimately led to Herbst's failure. His efforts to popularize knowledge about Delbrück's achievements were only partially successful (Sikorski's and Majewski's works, above all).

Although Krasuski was associated with the Poznań academic community throughout his career, representatives of the "Poznań School" did not include his monographs. He correctly reconstructed Delbrück's views on the nature of war and how to study military history. He placed the Berlin professor's ideas within the broader context of historical and philosophical debates in Germany at the turn of the century.[123] Krasuski recognized Delbrück's polemical temperament, as well as the necessity of confronting many established views with the new methods and discoveries.[124] Additionally, Krasuski described Delbrück's friendly attitude toward the Polish cause and his consistent opposition to the Pan-German League.[125]

Krasuski's efforts did not result in increased interest in the topic. From 1945 to 1989, military historians were primarily concerned with disputes over the achievements of Polish authors from the interwar period and whether their achievements could be incorporated into a Marxist paradigm. Consequently, the idea that the "Polish School" of military history was distinct, or even exceptional, emerged. This argument was often used to justify disregarding the main currents of historical discourse conducted outside Poland.

123 *Ibid*., pp. 55–57, 66, 77–79, 86.
124 *Ibid*., pp. 54–57.
125 *Ibid*., pp. 147–154, 186–224.

7.3 The period after 1989

Political transformations in Poland after 1989 resulted in changes to the way higher education, military research, and publishing institutions functioned. The 1990s were a time of discussions about new perspectives, often difficult to define due to the lack of a coherent vision of the conditions for conducting historical studies. While there were conflicting diagnoses, postulates, and assessments, there was also a general consensus about the crisis affecting military history research.[126] It stemmed from the need to develop new methodological guidelines resulting from the rejection of Marxism, as well as the reorganization of military research structures largely dictated by the Ministry of National Defense's search for current savings.[127]

126 Benon Miśkiewicz, «Nowa sytuacja w polskiej nauce historyczno-wojskowej,» in Waldemar Rezmer, Zbigniew Karpus (ed.), *Stan i perspektywy rozwoju historii wojskowej w Polsce (III Ogólnopolskie Forum Historyków Wojskowych. Toruń, 5–6 grudnia 1996)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 1997, pp. 163–168; Id., «Polska historia wojskowa w ostatniej dekadzie XX wieku,» in Henryk Stańczyk (ed.), *Polska historiografia wojskowa. Stan badań i perspektywy rozwoju (VI Ogólnopolskie Forum Historyków Wojskowości)*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2002, pp. 10–17; Id., «Historiografia wojskowa a problemy,» *cit*., pp. 32–34; Id., «Czynniki wpływające na rozwój badań historycznowojskowych,» in Tadeusz Dubicki, Tadeusz Panecki (ed.), *Polska historiografia wojskowa wobec wyzwań badawczych i politycznych XXI wieku (VIII Forum Historyków Wojskowych)*, Wydawnictwo Akademii im. Jana Długosza, Częstochowa 2006, pp. 11–18; Czesław Grzelak, «Czy polska historia wojskowa zdoła się odrodzić?,» in Zbigniew Moszumański (ed.), *Szefowie ośrodków naukowo-badawczych wojskowej służby historycznej 1921–2002. Materiały z konferencji naukowej, Warszawa, 29 listopada 2002 r.*, Comandor, Warszawa 2003, pp. 36–38; Wiesław Majewski, «Jaka historia wojskowa jest nam potrzebna?,» in Zbigniew Moszumański (ed.), *Szefowie ośrodków naukowo-badawczych wojskowej służby historycznej 1921–2002. Materiały z konferencji naukowej, Warszawa, 29 listopada 2002 r.*, Comandor, Warszawa 2003, pp. 47–48, 62–70; Waldemar Rezmer, «Kilka uwag o aktualnym stanie polskiej historii wojskowej (wojskowości),» in Karol Olejnik (ed.), *Wojna jako przedmiot badań historycznych*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2006, pp. 127–129, 141; Id., «Czy warto organizować Ogólnopolskie Forum Historyków Wojskowych (Wojskowości?),» *Europa Orientalis. Studia z Dziejów Europy Wschodniej i Państw Bałtyckich*, 7, 2016, pp. 241–263. Some historians attributed the crisis directly to the changes occurring in 1989, while others pointed to 1997, the year the Military Historical Institute lost its independence, as the critical date. However, from the perspective of this chapter's content, the dispute is of secondary importance. Therefore, I will only highlight the problem and leave its resolution to other researchers. Ultimately, the Military Historical Institute was dissolved in 2001.

127 Stefan Zwoliński, «Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny,» *cit*., pp. 130–131; Andrzej Ajnenkiel, «80 lat w służbie historii wojskowej,» in Zbigniew Moszumański (ed.), *Szefowie ośrodków naukowo-badawczych wojskowej służby historycznej 1921–2002. Materiały z konferencji*

One symptom of destabilization was the growing methodological divide between military historians and other specialists. Martin van Creveld and John A. Lynn once warned of the dangerous consequences of this phenomenon.[128] Many authors continued to believe that no new approaches to studying military affairs had emerged since the interwar period.[129] Their conviction has led to a further decline in the academic authority of military historians, who are generally considered a second-rate category of scholars.[130]

The justification for combining military history with educational and upbringing activities carried out in the Polish Army was increasingly questioned, emphasizing the general cognitive aspects of research and, consequently, the substantive advantage of civilian authors.[131] The growing demand for the further "civilization" of military history studies can be interpreted as an attempt—sometimes unconscious—to address the postulates put forth by Delbrück and his followers, while also trying to bridge the gap with Western academic circles.

Waldemar Rezmer (1949–) pointed out another problem: the lack of translations of valuable foreign-language books. Before 1989, Soviet works dominated, which gradually deepened the decline in knowledge of the findings and research trends proposed by Western historians. After 1990, there was a surge in

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naukowej, Warszawa, 29 listopada 2002 r., Comandor, Warszawa 2003, pp. 22–23; Czesław Szafran, Zbigniew Wojciechowski, «Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny (1959–2001),» in Zbigniew Moszumański (ed.), *Szefowie ośrodków naukowo-badawczych wojskowej służby historycznej 1921–2002. Materiały z konferencji naukowej, Warszawa, 29 listopada 2002 r.*, Comandor, Warszawa 2003, pp. 125–126, 132–133.

128 Martin van Creveld, «Thoughts on Military History,» *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 4, Military History, 1983, pp. 549–566; John A. Lynn, «The Embattled Future of Academic Military History,» *JMH*, 61, 4, 1997, pp. 777–789.

129 See Benon Miśkiewicz, *Wprowadzenie do badań historycznowojskowych*, Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2001; Id., *Badania historycznowojskowe. Przedmiot, podstawy badawcze, metodyka*, Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2006; Jarosław J. Piątek, «Nowe trendy i postulaty badawcze do studiów nad dziejami wojskowymi,» in Tadeusz Dubicki, Tadeusz Panecki (ed.), *Polska historiografia wojskowa wobec wyzwań badawczych i politycznych XXI wieku (VIII Forum Historyków Wojskowych)*, Wydawnictwo Akademii im. Jana Długosza, Częstochowa 2006, pp. 161–171.

130 Jerzy Maroń, *O osobliwościach polskiej historii*, *cit*., p. 7.

131 Wiesław Majewski, «Jaka historia wojskowa,» *cit*., p. 58; Jerzy Maroń, «Historia wojskowa czy historia wojskowości. Na marginesie dyskusji w polskiej historiografii,» in Jacek Jędrysiak et al. (ed.), *Wojsko – polityka – społeczeństwo. Studia z historii społecznej od antyku do współczesności*, Gajt, Wrocław 2013, p. 708.

the translation of foreign books, primarily from English. Often, the translations available in Poland are not made for the substantive quality of the books but for their commercial potential.[132] As a result, Polish readers are taught to idolize novelty and treat classical literature as outdated relics. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the publication of translations of works by Delbrück, Oman, Lot, and John Keegan, even after many years, did not constitute a major event and was met with online misunderstanding. The situation is not improved by the persistent focus on publications by Polish authors in higher education programs. For instance, Miśkiewicz's handbook makes no mention of Delbrück or the "new military history."[133] Years of neglect have led to a situation in which Polish authors who refer to the "new military history" are either unaware of it or do not want to be associated with military studies.

A lack of awareness of processes happening outside of Poland stems from the vast amount of information bombarding recipients through various media, primarily the Internet. Information overload hinders calm analysis and in-depth reflection. Another issue is the status given to works written by professional Polish officers of the interwar period. They treated the cognitive function of history as equivalent to, or even secondary to, the needs of the reborn Polish Army. Their vision of conducting research only on a small scale was corrected and supplemented in the postwar years. Thus, a dominant current was shaped in the non-academic space, with all its negative consequences. Despite the efforts of Herbst and Sikorski, there is not much chance of changing the situation today, as Delbrück's work did not resonate properly in previous years.

Notably, military historiography research conducted in Poland—which is exceptionally extensive compared to other countries—often occurs in isolation from the European context. While German ideas did not generate much interest among "researchers in military uniforms," whose work fell within the interwar period, French ideas did. However, even French influences are often overlooked.[134] Contemporary researchers do not encounter Delbrück's name in

132 Waldemar Rezmer, «Kilka uwag o aktualnym stanie,» *cit*., pp. 129–133, 139–140; Id., «Czy warto organizować,» *cit.*, p. 248.

133 Benon Miśkiewicz, *Wprowadzenie do badań*, *cit.*; Id., *Badania historycznowojskowe*, *cit.*

134 An exception is the article by Colonel Alphonse Grasset (1873–1952), mainly because it was translated into Polish: Alphonse Grasset, «Jedna z metod pracy historyczno-wojskowej,»

analyzed publications, so they do not consult his work. Their attitude unintentionally marginalizes his significance and raises questions about the state of Polish military history.

Of course, affirming native tradition does not mean that important studies have not been conducted in Poland. The common belief that military historians are stuck in a "methodological disability" has recently led to an increasing number of calls to remove military studies from academia. Fulfilling these demands would be disastrous and wasteful, undoing the years of effort by Delbrück and his followers. Similar trends have intensified at many Western universities, where military historians' work is being undermined by accusations of promoting militarism, colonialism, and national resentment. Unfortunately, this process affects the perception of classics in military historiography, diminishing their significance without an understanding of their views on history. One need only recall Victor D. Hanson's bizarre opinion about Delbrück and other German scholars from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[135]

Despite the aforementioned negative phenomena, there seems to be a little resurgence of interest in Delbrück's work in Poland for the first time since the days of Herbst and Sikorski.

First and foremost, the subsequent volumes of the Polish translation of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* were published beginning in 2012, increasing access to Delbrück's primary work.

Two years earlier, Edward A. Mierzwa (1941–) attempted to answer the question of who deserves the title of the "father of modern military history":

Bellona, 27, 3, 1927, pp. 227–244. During this time, more translations of French works were published, including those by Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, and Generals Hubert Camon and Henri Bonnal (1844–1917). However, a comprehensive study of French influences on the development of Polish military historiography is lacking. Such a study is crucial in the context of rejecting German influence, including Delbrück's purely academic concepts. The aforementioned authors, who were proponents of the "general staff perspective," were primarily interested in devising practical solutions for future conflicts rather than understanding the past.

135 Victor D. Hanson, «The modern historiography of ancient warfare,» in Philip Sabin, Hans van Wees, Michael Whitby (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, 1, *Greece, the Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 7–8, 18.

Clausewitz, Colonel Wilhelm Rüstow, or Delbrück.[136] One might wonder why Oman was not included; given the obvious verdict, the selection of authors was of secondary importance. Mierzwa naturally chose Delbrück;[137] however, providing a short biography of the Berlin professor was more valuable than answering the question.[138] Mierzwa noted the similarity between Delbrück's approach and that of the first generation of "*Annales* School" representatives,[139] which is particularly advantageous in Poland, where the misconception that the "Annalists" completely negated military studies is widespread. Mierzwa situates Delbrück among proponents of writing history from political and sociocultural perspectives, placing his achievements in a broader context. In contrast, Grabski's monumental work on the history of historiography portrays Delbrück merely as one of Ranke's continuators.[140]

Mierzwa also dedicated one of the subchapters of his monograph on nineteenth-century German-language historiography to the "father of military history," offering several original assessments of Delbrück's work.[141]

For the Polish edition of the third volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, Marcin Skrobek (1975–) prepared a short biography of its author.[142] Instead of simply compiling facts about Delbrück's life, Skrobek explained the essence of *Sachkritik* and outlined the context of Delbrück's historical research.[143] Skrobek's study is the first Polish publication about the Berlin professor since Płoski's article. Notably, Polish readers had to wait eighty-eight years for it.

Recently, I attempted to explain the reasons for the different developmental

136 Edward A. Mierzwa, «Nowożytna historia wojskowa i jej twórcy,» *Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne*, 11, 2010, p. 105.

137 *Ibid*., p. 127.

138 *Ibid*., pp. 110–116.

139 *Ibid*., p. 113.

140 Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, wyd. 3, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2011, pp. 477, 510.

141 Edward A. Mierzwa, *Historia historiografii. Wiek XIX*, 3, *Historiografia niemieckojęzyczna*, Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie przy Filii Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach, Piotrków Trybunalski 2015, pp. 352–359.

142 Marcin Skrobek, «Hans Delbrück i jego badania historyczno-wojskowe,» in Hans Delbrück, Średniowieczna sztuka wojenna, 1, *Wczesne średniowiecze*, Napoleon V, Oświęcim 2018, pp. 11–17.

143 *Ibid*., pp. 11–12, 14–16.

paths of the "Polish School" of military history and of research on ancient warfare.[144] I indicated that different institutional affiliations (the Polish Army vs. higher education institutions) were the main reason for the authors' different priorities. Polish classicists usually had a thorough understanding of Delbrück's concepts, resulting in fundamental differences.

Given the current conditions, it would be naive to think that Delbrück could have received the recognition he deserved in Poland in the previous century. If academic military history is to survive, the field must be more open to social and cultural aspects. One possible approach is to revisit the perspective proposed by the Berlin professor. Although some of his detailed interpretations have been proven incorrect, his general research assumptions have lost little relevance. Focusing on the achievements of Tokarz, Kukiel, or Laskowski provides instructive insights, but it does little to encourage the exploration of new research areas. It also makes it increasingly difficult to engage in methodological discourse with representatives of other specialties. Building new monuments, including one for Delbrück, is unnecessary. However, a broader consideration of poorly understood classics is essential to finding a starting point in Poland for exploring newer, post-Delbrückian trends.

144 Michał N. Faszcza, «Narodziny „polskiej szkoły" (część 1),» *cit.*, pp. 221–235; Id. «Narodziny „polskiej szkoły" historii militarnej a wojskowość antyczna. W poszukiwaniu tożsamości badawczej (część 2),» *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, 22, 1, 2023, pp. 135–167.

Hans Delbrück arguing with Friedrich von Bernhardi

Conclusions

In 1920 and 1921, the University of Berlin authorities refused Hans Delbrück to establish a Chair of Military History. The very fact that such a request was made demonstrates how much had changed since 1881, when they initially did not even want to initiate his habilitation procedure. After 40 years of struggling to gain acceptance for the new historical specialty, Delbrück had amassed quite a sizable group of followers of his method, who often engaged in polemics with him but were able to do so thanks to the academic space he created. Delbrück earned the prestigious title of the "father of military history" not only because he was the first in Europe to obtain a habilitation based on a dissertation dedicated to military issues, but also because he moved away from the "general staff perspective" and gave military studies a fully academic form. Thanks to Delbrück, military history became a legitimate area of historical analysis, though it still met with disapproval from some scholars.

The direct influence of Leopold von Ranke, who consistently advocated for the writing of universal history, became apparent. Recognizing the central role of the state, Ranke prioritized political history, a focus reflected in the title of Delbrück's major work. However, Delbrück approached the Rankean historiographical project more broadly, applying universalism in terms of both time and geography to individual specialties as well. This prompted him to address the previously neglected history of military affairs by effectively academizing it. Toward the end of his life, Delbrück returned to Ranke's universal history project, publishing a monumental synthesis of world history between 1924 and 1928.

Delbrück's interest in universal history provided him with a broad perspective, enabling him to contextualize military issues within a broader cultural framework. While the "Prussian Historical School" influenced his work, as a neo-Rankean, he opposed the dominant national orientation of historiography at the time, considering it a dangerous limitation of research scope. Consequently,

he was able to capture trends extending beyond a single state or group of states. He demonstrated that historical phenomena are not isolated and that, although the cultural environment is created based on political subjectivity, it also consists of elements radiating from the outside. His focus on mutual influences highlights an important characteristic of Delbrück's work: he was primarily interested in processes, not individual events. He only paid attention to individual events insofar as they brought him closer to grasping general trends, allowing him to paint a broad picture of the phenomenon.

Unlike the officers of the Prussian General Staff and later the German Great General Staff, he was hesitant to treat military history in a utilitarian way. He did not deny them the right to conduct their own analyses, but he referred to them as "military critics" or "military writers," not historians. His attitude provoked conflicts, but it aimed to completely scholarize military studies. According to Delbrück, military history only makes sense when conducted in accordance with generally accepted academic standards. Otherwise, transplanted to universities, it would become a "lesser specialty," lacking the necessary references to political, social, economic, and cultural contexts. In his view, an understanding of the specifics of the sources used, along with these factors, determined the possibility of drawing correct conclusions rather than the conviction of a linear development of military concepts based on rationality and technological progress.

Delbrück's methodological assumptions aligned with historicism, a concept that posits the necessity of interpreting historical events within the context of the time in which they occurred. Historicism rejects the idea of universal behavioral patterns independent of the cultural circles formed by past societies. By adopting historicism, Delbrück was able to be more flexible in his descriptions by drawing on various aspects of historical reality.

The Berlin professor was also sensitive to the treatment of sources, requiring prior acknowledgment of their origin and the literary conventions influencing their content. He opposed the a priori assumption of a particular historian's credibility simply because some work had entered the canon of European literature. In his opinion, literary ability was not equivalent to the intention of depicting reality, as if writers from centuries past were working according to guidelines formulated by Ranke. Consequently, he frequently criticized officers of the mil-

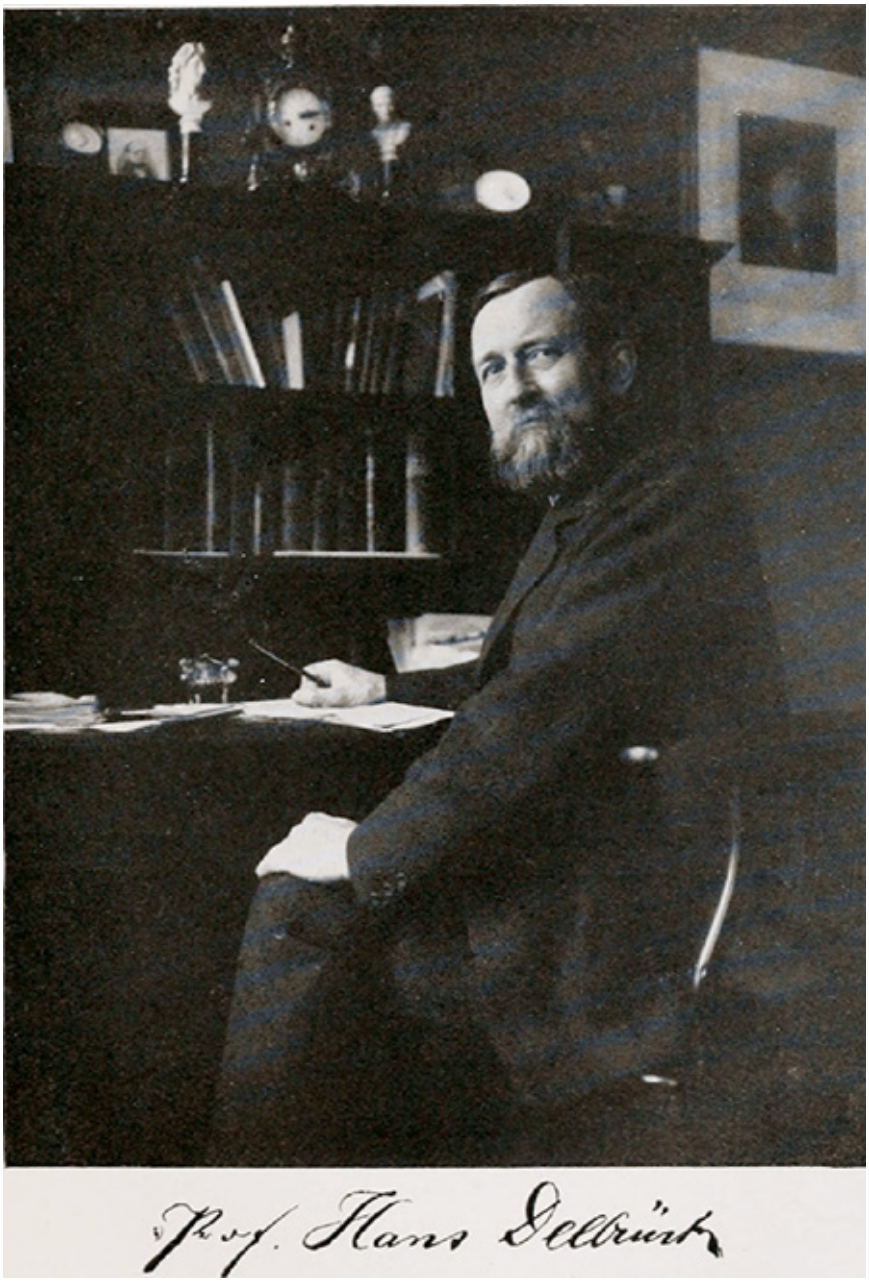
itary historical service for attempting to reconstruct the course of military operations without first determining the nature of the sources used. Source criticism was usually beyond their capabilities, which led to sharp attacks on Delbrück. He was maliciously referred to as the "civilian strategist" for lack of better arguments. Most of the officers of the Great General Staff claimed that military education and experience were necessary to study military history. Delbrück admitted that knowledge of the era came from analyzing historical sources. Joining their still-unresolved dispute today, one might jokingly ask, "What do fighting in a phalanx and commanding a tank company have in common?"

The "father of military history" did not entirely dismiss the value of military experience. In some cases, it can help verify source data relating to the limitations of the human body, for example. He also advocated conducting field studies through personal topographic research and analyzing plans and maps. By supplementing historical expeditions with measurable demographic, economic, and technical data, he aimed to obtain the most multifaceted picture of military affairs possible, unattainable through the philological method prevalent in universities or the "general staff perspective" dominant among the officers.

All of the aforementioned aspects constituted *Sachkritik*, an authorial method combining solid source analysis with practical rationality. Dieter Hertz-Eichenrode (1932–), who has been involved with the Berlin academic community for decades, described Delbrück's historical achievements as the most spectacular among the "new school" of German historians.[1] Few scholars have been able to create not only a new historical specialty but also coherent principles for its practice. The basic assumptions of academic military history writing remain largely unchanged, partly deepened by the proponents of the "new military history." However, just as their use posed difficulties for numerous authors writing in Delbrück's time, many people today are also taking shortcuts by reviving the archaic "general staff perspective."

A significant weakness of *Sachkritik* was the introduction of the deeply subjective factor of individual probability assessment, which was often linked to

1 Dieter Hertz-Eichenrode, «Die „Neuere Geschichte" an der Berliner Universität. Historiker und Geschichtsschreibung im 19./20. Jahrhundert,» in Reimer Hansen, Wolfgang Ribbe (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Berlin im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Persönlichkeiten und Institutionen*, De Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1992, p. 283.



Hans Delbrück (1848–1929) in 1910 ca. From Frederic William While, *Men around the Kaiser. The Makers of Modern Germany*, Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1913.

personal experiences difficult to transfer to other authors. A person who experienced fear or fatigue during wartime operations maintained a distance from patriotically charged descriptions of the campaigns, which was not directly evident from the sources. During the time dominated by romantic nationalism, it was easy to question Delbrück's skepticism, trusting the prevailing, idealistic narrative-building trend. Only the representatives of the "new military history" were able to make full use of this element of *Sachkritik*, giving it a fully academic basis.

Sachkritik, Delbrück's original idea, could not easily be linked to existing concepts. The Berlin professor's intellectual relationship with Georg W. F. Hegel and General Carl von Clausewitz was different and concerned the categorization of individual military phenomena. The work by Colonel Wilhelm Rüstow served only as Delbrück's inspiration to dedicate himself to military history, as it was maintained in a traditional manner. The influence of Crown Prince Friedrich, later Emperor Friedrich III, was not purely academic in nature and took a similar form to Rüstow's. Therefore, the scholars who most strongly influenced Delbrück's historiographical views were Theodor Mommsen and Karl J. Beloch.

Both of them were classicists, which is not accidental. Antiquity held a special place in nineteenth-century German culture, providing models for personal and political life. Mommsen was the first historian to receive the Nobel Prize in 1902. Therefore, Delbrück's turn toward antiquity was not solely related to his work on the first volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. He could learn the most from the classicists, even though many of them guarded their privileged position jealously from the "intruder." Delbrück had heated disputes with scholars of antiquity, resulting in the quick spread of *Sachkritik* among them.

Friedrich II's reign and antiquity were Delbrück's favorite areas of research, but his influence on the postwar discourse was different for each.

In the field of ancient history, Delbrück maintained his status as a classic. His descriptions of the Battles of Marathon and Cannae may be exemplary. His work was recognized as significant shortly after its publication. For example, Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen developed a war plan against France based on Delbrück's work. Karl Christ stated that Delbrück is an example of a re-

searcher whose findings still serve as fundamental references, whose name is mentioned not just out of respect for the great pioneers, but also because his work is still relevant.[2] The long-standing conflict between the Berlin professor and Johannes Kromayer only accelerated the acceptance of *Sachkritik* among German classicists, and neither scholar's academic standing was shaken by their use of personal arguments.

The spread of Delbrück's views on Friedrich II's wars was hindered by the "strategy dispute," which pitted them against the interpretations promoted by the military historical service. The end of the conflict negatively impacted the transparency of both sides' arguments. In such a situation, synthetic studies, free from direct references to controversial issues, became the most frequently cited. These, however, appeared under the banner of the Great General Staff, as Delbrück only decided on a short summary in 1920. After 1933, his works were effectively eliminated from the mainstream academic discourse in Germany. The thirteen-year period was too short for Delbrück to establish his place in postwar publications concerning Friedrich II. Nevertheless, Gordon A. Craig still considered Delbrück's strategic concepts as substantial in the evolution of military historiography, whether directly or indirectly.[3]

Medievalists were the most receptive to Delbrück's work, besides ancient scholars. The Middle Ages was important to the "father of military history" from the beginning of his academic career. His doctoral dissertation, completed in 1873 under the supervision of Heinrich von Sybel, addressed medieval topics. Medieval studies at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were largely free from the strong ambition-driven disputes that characterized the study of ancient history and the nationalist undertones that burdened the study of Friedrich II. Moreover, only Charles Oman's book could rival the third volume of *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, which immediately secured its dominance. Publications of Delbrück and Oman also decisively influenced the future direc-

2 Karl Christ, «Einleitung zum Nachdruck der dritten Auflage von 1964,» in Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1, *Das Altertum*, Nachdruck der 3. Aufl., Nikol, Hamburg 2017, p. 708.

3 Gordon A. Craig, «Delbrück: The Military Historian,» in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 353.

tion of research. Through Ferdinand Lot, Marc Bloch, and Piero Pieri, Delbrück indirectly played a role in the emergence of the "*Annales* School." This fact usually goes unnoticed by admirers of the "Annalistic" approach to history, who often question the validity of military history at universities.

In his brief memoir of Delbrück, published in 1929, his longtime colleague and collaborator Friedrich Meinecke wrote that the recently deceased professor's character and work style enabled him to achieve great discoveries but also make spectacular mistakes.[4] Meinecke's observation seems to aptly summarize Delbrück's work. Delbrück was never one to compromise, adhering to Ranke's understanding of historical objectivity. He dealt ruthlessly with cases of dishonesty, usually targeting officers of the military historical service. His relationship with General Friedrich von Bernhardi became openly hostile, and Bernhardi continued to disparage Delbrück even after Schlieffen removed him from the Great General Staff. Similar situations occurred with Kromayer and Eduard Meyer. Delbrück's closeness to Mommsen prevented the development of antagonism with Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

The "father of military history" did not endear himself to the public with his political stance. He was anti-Bismarck from the beginning and hostile toward all manifestations of political radicalism. Delbrück fought particularly hard against the influence of the Pan-German League, which had gained widespread support among academics. He also targeted the German Eastern Marches Association, which lost a defamation lawsuit against him in 1904. Delbrück showed more understanding toward socialists, but mainly because he believed they could effectively pressure the government to pass social legislation. He called Karl Marx a dangerous charlatan. Delbrück rejected the ideologization of scholarship and remained a conservative liberal who proclaimed the supremacy of personal freedom. In his view, chauvinistic nationalism and socialism undermined the most important value in political life by prioritizing the collective over the individual.

Delbrück's connection with *Preußische Jahrbücher* is impossible to overlook. He edited the journal from 1883 to 1919. In 1889, he established its quasi-expert status by publishing texts prepared by academics in the fields of politics and history. The journal's significance increased between 1914 and 1918

4 Friedrich Meinecke, «Vermichtes [Hans Delbrück],» *HZ*, 140, 3, 1929, p. 703.

because it published analyses of Germany's military situation on all fronts. Delbrück remained involved in public affairs after the Great War ended. He served on various commissions responsible for determining the causes of the defeat. He presented reports containing critical assessments of General Erich Ludendorff's decisions. Delbrück was even a member of the German peace delegation in Versailles. However, his political involvement did not go unnoticed, and after 1933, it contributed to the deliberate marginalization of his work in Germany.

Delbrück's passion for politics, demonstrated by his service as a member of parliament from 1882 to 1890, never overshadowed his life's calling: the profession of a historian. His legacy in the field of historiography proved to be the most important indeed, paving the way for subsequent generations of military historians.

Delbrück's influence was minimal in France and, with regard to the period after 1945, in Germany. The latter is not dictated by substantive reasons but rather by a formal ban on conducting military history research at civilian universities. Many German authors promoted chauvinistic theories related to the Third Reich's ideology, leading to the abandonment of military history in academia. Had Delbrück been permitted to establish the desired Chair of Military History at the University of Berlin, perhaps the extent of historiographic distortion might have been more limited.

Led by Michael Howard, John Keegan, Peter Paret, and Arden Bucholz, British and American scholars played a significant role in preserving and creatively developing Delbrück's legacy. His achievements also endure in Italy, largely thanks to Pieri's lasting influence. The "new military history" emerged within the Anglo-American cultural sphere, largely fulfilling Delbrück's postulates. Some authors question the "novelty" of this approach, considering it an expression of ignorance of German classical literature from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their position seems too extreme, and it would be more accurate to speak of the continuation of the work of at least some classical authors. Howard and Keegan, the most recognizable representatives of the "new military history," were open admirers of Delbrück's historical writing.

In Poland, Stanisław Herbst, Colonel Janusz Sikorski, and Wiesław Majewski promoted the achievements of the Berlin professor, thus connecting them to the legacy of Colonel Wacław Tokarz and General Marian Kukiel. However, the

close link between military studies and the research and publishing institutions of the Polish Army resulted in a historiographical model similar to the "general staff perspective," leading to different patterns than those of Delbrück. Consequently, the contributions of German pioneers remain largely unknown, as do many trends currently exploited in Western Europe.

Delbrück was not only the creator of a new historical specialty but also a pioneer of fully modern military history. Modern in the sense of freedom from political influences, openness to the political, social, economic, and cultural contexts, as well as having a purely academic character without claiming to provide practical solutions. Delbrück first presented his vision in 1887. Despite the passage of over 130 years, it remains relevant. At a time when researchers of military issues are facing growing identity crises, increasing marginalization, and blame for promoting aggressive attitudes in the public sphere, recalling Delbrück's academic path can contribute to changing this state of affairs. Every academic military historian stems from the Delbrück tradition, not the model preferred by the Great General Staff. As long as war is considered part of the general historical process, subject to the same principles of knowledge as other historical fields, it will be seen as a dramatic yet integral part of the human past. Moving away from Delbrück's assumptions would have a catastrophic impact not only on society's historical awareness. Misunderstanding of what armed conflict is inevitably leads to its infantilization, resulting in consequential decisions.

List of abbreviations

BJMH	*British Journal for Military History*
FbpG	*Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preußischen Geschichte*
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*
JdAM	*Jahrbücher für die deutsche Armee und Marine*
JMH	*The Journal of Military History*
JSS	*Journal of Strategic Studies*
MA	*Military Affairs*
MZ	*Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift*
PH	*Przegląd Historyczny*
PHW	*Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*
PJ	*Preußische Jahrbücher*
PW	*Przegląd Współczesny*
RhM	*Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*
SMHW	*Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*
SDPHW	*Studia z Dziejów Polskiej Historiografii Wojskowej*
WPH	*Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny*
ZpGL	*Zeitschrift für preußische Geschichte und Landeskunde*

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